THE

HIGHLANDS,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

THE REV. JAMES G. SMALL.

SECOND EDITION.

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1845.

TO

PROFESSOR WILSON,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH FEELINGS OF ADMIRATION, ESTEEM, AND GRATITUDE,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

It was not in the hope of finding amid the clang and the turmoil of these days of bustling excitement a very numerous auditory, that the author was last year induced to seek admittance into that minstrel band to which so obscure a place is now assigned, and to whose harping so careless an ear is turned by the busy and pre-occupied multitude.

To this his expectations were limited, that here and there a few thoughtful spirits or a few partial hearts might be willing to gather around him as he sang, and to listen, with no critical or fastidious ear, to strains which, with somewhat of earnest simplicity, but with no affectation of startling vehemence or high-sounding pomp of tone, discoursed of themes which in themselves have an attraction for the most of those whose ear he hoped to gain, and which, though to a great extent connected with his own mountain,

land, are yet of no mere local or temporary interest, but are fitted to kindle the imagination and affect the heart of all who have an eye and a soul for the naturally or spiritually sublime.

That his hopes have been more than realized, it were affectation to deny. The suspicious flattery of partial lips would have had little weight in inducing him to consent to appear before that wide circle of auditors who are wont to assemble around the company which he now ventures to join; but the voice of unequivocal approbation from the unbiassed umpires of literature in all parts of our own land,—the eloquent utterance of genial sympathy by Scotland's most beloved and gifted sons on the far plains of India,—and the complacent smile of our country's laureled and venerated bards,—these suffrages he owns have inspired a hope which neither parental affection for his own offspring nor the facile approval of friendship could have awakened.

This only he would remark for himself before repeating his simple melody on the Highland harp, that his lay is meant rather as a reflective than as a descriptive one,—that he has endeavoured rather to interpret the voice of Nature in

human language, than literally to record the mystic sounds that issue from her oracle, or minutely to delineate the hieroglyphic characters that are traced on the lofty walls and massy columns of her ancient temple; though, at the same time, he hopes that sufficient intimations have been given of what his eyes have actually seen, and his ears heard, to enable those who are conversant with such scenes to judge of the fidelity of his interpretations. For the sake of those, however, who may place such confidence in him as to allow him to guide them through those glorious regions, amid which he has spent so many happy days, he has added, in plain prose, a description of a tour, in which the reader will be conducted, *pari passu*, with the minstrel, but without the hazard of losing his way, or mistaking the allusions of the song. Our Queen's renewed visit to the Highlands has this year a second time directed the eyes of the empire to that region; and with respect to the poem of which he has now been speaking, as well as that on the Scottish Martyrs, the author has not been disappointed in the hope he ventured to express on their first publication,—that "re-

cent events having given an additional interest to subjects in themselves so worthy of the lyre, there might be found many breasts which would not merely respond to his strains, simple as they were, but would return them with a redoubling echo that would compensate for the feebleness of the voice which gave them forth."

The end which the author proposed to himself in writing the tale entitled "Imagination," was to exemplify some of the workings of an imaginative spirit in its natural and in its renewed and enlightened state: while in the ballad "Menie," now for the first time published, though written many years ago, he has sought to embody some of the expressions in which wounded nature and divinely wrought resignation will find vent in humble life. And he may remark that, in his poetical attempts in general, his object has been, not the mere entertainment of the fancy, but the purifying and soothing of the heart.

Edinburgh, Dec. 1844.

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THE HIGHLANDS,

A Poem,

IN FIVE CANTOS.



THE HIGHLAN…

CANTO FIRST.

I.

Dull is the soul that e'er hath roamed along
'Mong Scotia's vales and hills, and hath not caught
The inspiring breath that prompts to pensive song;
To whom, in seasons of sweet, silent thought,
The image of these scenes is never brought,
Nor fondly cherished as a precious dower;
Upon whose breast their influence hath not wrought
As with a charm—whose gently soothing power
His heart hath gladly owned in many an after hour.

II.

And I have felt that charm;—and, not in vain,
Upon my soul unfadingly impressed,
These scenes in lively vision still remain;
For never yet hath my delighted breast
Such calm, deep, purifying joy confessed,
As when 'mid these bright regions I have stood,
Or as when Memory my soul hath blessed,
And with her magic mirror hath renewed
To fancy's gladdened eye, lake, dell, and bosky wood.

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III.

Gazing o'er floods and streams, o'er glades and hills,
From some lone glen or some majestic height,
Say whence such deep, sublime emotion fills
The musing soul, and whence such calm delight
Steals o'er the heart;—whence seem they to the sight
So girt with power and wild magnificence?
Is it that, in themselves, they have the might
To stir the spirit as they please the sense,
Or whence their secret charm? Canst thou, sweet Muse,
say whence?

IV.

It is a glorious power, that, from the mind,
Like a creative spirit, wanders forth,
And on immortal wings flies, unconfined,
Exulting in its might, through heaven and earth,
Giving to all it looks on a new birth.
'Tis this so hallows the grey, mouldering tower;
Hence laugh the valleys with such lively mirth—
Hence frown the hills with such s bduing power—
Hence strike the clouds such awe when 'mid the storm
they lower.

V.

To thee, Imagination, hath been given
A wondrous power, that never knows decay,
To imitate the glorious work of heaven,
And breathe a living soul into the clay.
Things that are not tkou call'st, and they obey;
All nature yields to thy benign control;
It needs but that thy quick'ning voice should say
"Let this fair frame have life," and lo! a soul,
In thine own image formed, pervades the breathing
whole.

VI.

Yes! 'tis the life in Scotia's guardian hills
That seems to dwell—and in each waving wood,
And bellowing torrent—it is this that fills
The heart with rapture, as, in musing mood,
The soul goes out upon the lake's calm flood,
Or communes with the clouds; for it can find
In them companions. Now it loves to brood
O'er the still waters; now the awakened mind
Commingles with the storm, associate of the wind.

VII.

And where, Imagination, dost thou reign
With vaster power—or where delight'st thou more
To walk majestic with thy mystic train
Of fancies rapturous—or where to pour
Thy life-imparting influence—than o'er
Old Scotia's bounding streams and mountains wild?
Ah! well thou lov'st to listen to the roar
Of her far torrents, and to lead thy child
Entranced where rugged hills on hills to heaven are piled.

VIII.

Nor giv'st thou only life to all things fair,
And wondrous, and sublime—thy call can bring
Into the trackless depths of liquid air
From lonely dell, dark cave, and murmuring spring,
Spirits that fly aloft on wanton wing—
Amid the storm career upon the blast—
Glide o'er the earth, or sport on grassy ring;
Or thou canst bid thy sons behold, aghast,
The forms of those who dwelt on earth in ages past.

IX.

Thus he who loves with thee at eve to stray
Through wood and wold, when not a jarring sound
Breaks the sweet stillness of the closing day,
Feels as if walking on enchanted ground,
And, wrapt in awful musing, sees around
Spirits of peace or forms of terror rise;
He sees them dancing on each verdant mound,
He sees them trooping from the silent skies,
And still the rugged scene grows wilder in his eyes.

X.

Ye gentle spirits! ye sweet fays! with whom
As through your own domains I lonely roved
Amid the holy twilight's pensive gloom,
With playful fancies pleased, I oft have loved
To hold mysterious converse—far removed
From the world's ceaseless strife, in some fair scene
By lavish nature decked as best behoved
Your dwelling, where some glad stream gushed between
Two hills sublime, or 'mid some ring of fairy green;

XI.

Leave, lovely spirits! those wild haunts awhile,
Where most it suits ye—most ye love to dwell;
And deign, even here, upon my dreams to smile.
Let your known voices on my spirit swell,
Soft as the music of some village bell
Amid your own delightful valleys pealing.
Come! to my soul tales of past ages tell,
The secrets of your chosen homes revealing,
And tune my soul afresh to childhood's raptured feeling.

Or may ye not the strong enchantment break,
That binds ye to some hill, or stream, or glen?
Your charmed circle may ye not forsake,
To dwell awhile among the abodes of men?
Then come, thou pensive nymph, come, Memory, then—
For with me thou hast trod each haunted place,
And treasured its delights—come, pour again
Their influence on my soul; revive each trace
Which Time and busy thoughts have laboured to deface.

XIII.

Or on Imagination's joyous wing
Fly forth, my soul, o'er mountain, strath, and dell.
There all thou seest shall sweet remembrance bring
Of by-gone days: for 'mid these scenes full well
Have Purity and Freedom loved to dwell,
Even when exiled from all the world beside.
There many a lay upon thine ear shall swell,
From distance borne along the swelling tide
Of Time. To these thou well may'st list with honest pride.

XIV.

For sweetly strung was Scotia's harp of old,
And as, in thrilling notes or melting strains,
To mighty chiefs and lovely maids it told
Of deeds that consecrate their native plains,
Or of Love's rapturous bliss and tender pains,
High beat the heart, or dropped the unbidden tear.
And still each glen the voice of song retains—
Still to the Highland heart these lays are dear—
Still loves it of the deeds of other times to hear.

XV.

Thus, joyfully, my soul, shalt thou be borne,
Following Tradition's mellowed voice, away
To view the varying aspect of the morn,
When shone the sun of glory's earliest ray
Upon thy country: 'mid the twilight grey
Of dim obscurity, see streaks of light
Portend the brightness of the coming day,
When burst that sun's full splendours on the sight—
Though clouded oft awhile, yet beautiful and bright!

XVI.

A people, then and there, may'st thou behold,
Indomitable as the rugged soil
O'er which they loved to roam—proud, free, and bold,
As their own mountains. They alone could foil
The arms of Rome, and rob them of their spoil;
Pierce the huge serpent that had twined around
The vanquished nations—bidding it uncoil,
And draw that head back, gored with many a wound,
In whose gemmed lustre they no fascination found.

XVII.

Free roaming 'mid their own wild hills and skies,
Dear and familiar ever to their sight;
Amid these scenes sublime, where, to their eyes,
In every woody glen and misty height,
Nature put forth her most stupendous might
To awe yet charm the soul, and to adorn
These favoured regions; they did take delight
To own themselves her children, and to scorn
All that appeared of Art and dull Restriction born.

XVIII.

And marvel not that to their simple heart
Uncultured Nature doubly was endeared;
And that the boastful blazonry of Art
Thus hateful to their zealous soul appeared,
And he who bore them as a foe was feared,
Since proudly it was borne upon the shield
Of those who dark Invasion's standard reared
Against them—since to Art's approach to yield,
Seemed base as 'twere to quit some long contested field.

XIX.

Nor strange that Nature's voice to them was sweet—
That her their mother they so loved to call:
Accordant with her voice their bosoms beat;
And the rude crag, the torrent's roaring fall,
The hurrying clouds, the tempest's fierceness—all
Spoke in a tone the sweetest to their soul.
And what might minds of gentler cast appal,
With pleasing and congenial influence stole
On minds that joyed in all that seemed to spurn control.

XX.

Yet dear and sacred ever in their sight
The ties that Nature's hand had bound appeared;
And him, the warrior chief who to the height
Of power and dignity by her was reared,
They loved, obeyed, and cheerfully revered.
He was the father of his tribe, and strong
The bonds by which to all he was endeared.
Their judge and leader—their defence from wrong—
His deeds filled every mind—his praises every song.

XXI.

To Nature's voice with reverential awe
They listened; and, from every sight and sound,
Imagination taught their souls to draw
Deep meanings; and, when all was still around,
If aught disturbed the solemn hush profound,
The heart that could all mortal terrors brave
Would flutter; and in these their fancy found—
Accordant with the stamp that feeling gave—
Revealings from above, or voices from the grave.

XXII.

While thus upon my soul the thoughts arise[1]
That call to mind the deeds of other days,
What scene does Fancy picture to mine eyes?
'Tis "woody Morven," where full oft the lays
Of ancient bards arose, to tell the praise
Of conquering chiefs, or chiefs who nobly fell.
My soul by Lora's murmuring water strays,
Whose woodland music oft did Ossian swell,
And by the cairns that mark where slumbering heroes dwell.

XXIII.

And see! as slow departs the summer day,
The clouds around in martial order close,
Forming themselves in dread and dark array,
Like the advance and charge of meeting foes;
And now, as each in the red radiance glows
Of the departing sun, they seem as dyed
In blood that from a thousand bosoms flows;
And there some ancient bard might have descried
The ghosts of warriors slain, still fired with martial pride.

XXIV.

Amid the storm, upon their cloudy cars,
Still rush they through the heavens, as once they
rushed,
Urged by revenge and wrath, to earthly wars.
And now see yonder host by victory flushed!
And see their foes beneath their onset crushed,
Pursued by fiery darts of forked light!
Victorious Fingal stops the rout, and hushed
Is now the tumult and the noise of fight:
And slow the foe retires, though still in timid flight.

XXV.

See the triumphant host amid the skies,
With joyful shouts, around their leader throng!
And, hark! I hear a gentle voice arise,
Borne by the soft and dying gale along.
Methinks it is the voice of Ossian's song,
Who sweeps his harp amid the "feast of shells."
Now soft it rises, and now, boldly strong,
As if in triumph and in joy, it swells;
And still on Fingal's might and Oscar's praise it dwells.

XXVI.

But now no longer glows the fading west;
The clouds amid the darkness disappear;
The wearied hosts of heaven have sunk to rest.
To-morrow they exchange the brand and spear,
And battle's wild delights, for sylvan cheer;
And, mounted on the clouds, their flying steeds,
Through heaven's wide fields pursue the shadowy
deer,
Sporting as once they did on earthly meads;
For still in heaven they love their former joys and deeds.

XXVII.

'Twas thus, when Scotia lay beneath the shade
Of ignorance—ere pure religion's light,
From blest Iona shining, yet displayed
The purity of that celestial height,
Where holy spirits dwell in glory bright,
Imagination pictured to the eye,
In viewless air or in the things of sight,
Spirits into whose state love bade men pry,—
Which something in themselves declared could never die.

XXVIII.

What is that something? 'tis the voice of heaven,
Which the immortal spirit hears within;
Which says, these powers, these feelings were not given,
In this abode of misery and sin
To live alone; that here we but begin
An endless being; that there is a state
Where suffering worth a recompense shall win;
Where heaven's just wrath the oppressor shall await,
Though dimly can blind man foresee his future fate.

XXIX.

And, when the soul its earthly house forsakes,
In minds untaught of heaven the thought will rise
That still of mortal passions it partakes,
And still is bound to earth by human ties;
And, leaving oft its mansion in the skies,
Will seek some spot of earth that once was dear;
Or, 'neath the shade of midnight, to the eyes
Of love and wakeful pilgrims will appear,
To warn them when some hour of gloom is drawing near.

XXX.

Nor when arose—these regions to illume—
The Sun of Righteousness, did even *his* ray
Dispel at once these phantoms of the gloom,
Or chase dark superstition's clouds away;
Yet did it raise them higher, and display,
In the bright tints which even on them it cast,
A cheering earnest of that glorious day
Which, when these clouds from Scotia's sky had passed,
Shed its benignant beams o'er all the land at last.

XXXI.

No more o'er Scotia's rugged hills and isles
Religion's light is from Iona shed;
And moulder now her old and hoary piles
O'er the low graves, where lie the mighty dead,
And holy men, who wont these scenes to tread;
Yet is it sweet to walk where they have trod;
Sweet is it, even in fancy, to be led
O'er scenes that have been Sanctity's abode,—
From whence o'er all the land such priceless blessings flowed.

XXXII.

And, oh! if fancy such deep joy can give,
Shrined in the heart such scenes may well remain,
When we have gazed on them. Then let me live
Those hours of holy musing o'er again,
When, borne rejoicing o'er the Western main, [2]
Far on the deep the sacred isle I viewed—
When rose upon my sight its ancient fane—
When on its hallowed shore entranced I stood,
And with its spirit felt my inmost soul imbued.

XXXIII.

It was on such a morn as that whereon
A light of influence purer far than aught
Yon glorious sun can boast, arose and shone—
Even that blest morn which o'er these waters brought,
From Erin's kindred shore, a frail bark, fraught
With a devoted band of heralds, led
By one whom God by His own Word had taught,
And by His Spirit fired with zeal to spread
The tidings of great joy through Him for man who bled.

XXXIV.

Calm rose that morning o'er these western Isles,
Shedding on all around a tranquil ray.
Old Ocean brightened into peaceful smiles,
As rolled the darkness from his face away;
And glad he hailed that blest, auspicious day.
More joyful then, methinks, than e'er before,
Through Staffa's pillared aisles his matin lay—
Wont ever there its orisons to pour—
Would swell in solemn strains, his Maker to adore.

XXXV.

For o'er the Western wave, that hallowed morn,
A bright and glorious star, of ray divine,
Like that which led to where the Christ was born,
Arose—with cheering beams ordained to shine,
And be to these rude isles a sacred sign,
Pointing to where, with gifts of purer worth
Than brought the Magi from the eastern mine,
They might repair to Him whose wondrous birth
Great glory brought to heaven, and spake good-will to earth.

XXXVI.

Wide o'er these rugged realms its hallowed ray
Was poured diffusive; nor on these alone:
O'er Southern regions, stretching far away,
With blessed power its heavenly lustre shone;
And they who sat in darkness joyed to own
The healing influence of its tranquil light:
And where a Saviour's name was not unknown,
Even there it shone with beams more purely bright
Than 'mid the obscuring clouds till then had reached their sight.

XXXVII.

In peaceful union here the brethren dwelt,
Studious of God's own Word—a holy band,
Eager to spread the heavenly peace they felt
In their own tranquil breasts o'er all the land;
To bid the sacred tree of life expand
O'er nations perishing around, and give
Its blessed fruits abundant to their hand,
That, eating of these fruits, their souls might live,
And from its shadowing leaves a healing balm receive.

XXXVIII.

Ah! not in monkish solitude retired
Dwelt they, remote from men, in selfish ease;
But, with deep ardour and devotion fired,
They spread abroad the glorious truth which frees
From strong delusions, deadening, while they please,
The heart led captive in the fetters wrought
By Superstition's hand, and formed to seize
The prostrate powers of feeling and of thought,
In the seductive snares of sense and passion caught.

XXXIX.

Such glorious aim o'er all their feelings shed
A hallowing power, which purified from earth,
And sense, and self; and with strong impulse led
The champions of the cross undaunted forth
To deadly warfare with the monstrous birth
Of the fell powers of darkness, that had reigned
With gloomiest sway o'er all the subject North.
Nor less resolved the struggle they maintained
'Gainst that usurping power which held the South
enchained.*

XL.

They called none master upon earth, nor bowed
The knee to the great harlot who sits throned [3]
On the seven hills, and blasphemous words and proud
Gives forth. One Lord and Lawgiver they owned—
One intercessor—Him who bled, and groaned,
And died to save them—Him, the great High Priest,
Who bore their griefs, and for their sins atoned.
By Him from bonds of guilty fear released,
They bore not on their brow the image of the beast.

XLI.

And when the pensive pilgrim wanders here, [3]
And gazes on these ruins, frail and low,
While softly falls upon his musing ear
The solemn sound of ocean's ceaseless flow:
Then holy feeling in his soul will glow,
More pure and sacred—more sublime and deep—
Than e'er deluded votary may know
'Neath proud cathedral domes, where music's sweep
And perfumed incense-clouds his sated senses steep.

* The Pope.

XLII.

Yes! many a mighty fane hath since been reared,
And many a stately structure yet may rise,
Yet more than all that spot shall be revered
Where old Iona's ruins meet the eyes;
Where, mingled with the dust of ages, lies
The mortal frame of him whose blessed feet
First brought the glorious message from the skies
To Scotia's sons, and made this Isle the seat
Where pure religion dwelt, and learning found retreat.

And, oh! with calmly musing eyes to trace
Each holy relic, each memorial hoar,
That still adorns the venerable place,
And brings to mind all that it was of yore!
To stand upon the consecrated shore,*
Oft trod by those who the glad tidings brought
To these once darkened regions; to adore,
Amid these sacred piles, in silent thought,
Him by whose Spirit led this lonely isle they sought!

Oh! then what sweet and grateful thoughts arise!
Yet how subdued the swelling thought of pride,
Standing where low the chief—the monarch lies!
How small a space suffices to divide
Hereditary foes—laid side by side,—
Their deeds forgot—almost their names unknown—
All record of their lives to fame denied,
Save the rude sculpture of the hoary stone,
By ruthless storms defaced, and by wild weeds o'ergrown!

XLV.

With slow, reluctant step I leave thy shore,
O blest Iona! and, while o'er the main
The vessel bears me, I sit gazing o'er
The dashing waves, still eager to retain
The distant prospect of thy crumbling fane,
Till but a dim speck on the deep appears:
But thou art hidden from my sight in vain;
Oft shall my musing soul, in after years,
Dwell where thy ancient pile its hoary ruin rears.

XLVI.

But Staffa rises o'er the heaving tide, [4]
And thither now my eager eyes are cast.
With sable cormorants its pillared side
Is peopled; and, high-soaring on the blast,
The curlews shriek around.—And now, at last,
We reach the cave whose hundred columns make
A gorgeous temple, solemn, high, and vast;
Where ocean's choirs the eternal song awake,
Calling our souls a part in that deep strain to take.

XLVII.

Yet here do many gaze with careless eyes—
Creatures of sensuous heart and earthly mould,
Who see unmoved the wondrous structure rise,
Hear through these aisles the ocean-anthem rolled,
And all the glories of this fane behold,
With souls unmoved—untouched by holy feeling—
Absorbed in speculations dry and cold—
While in their ears these solemn sounds are pealing,
And the mute rocks the while the Almighty's power
revealing.

XLVIII.

But, oh! to stand alone in such a place,
Or with a few congenial hearts to swell
The ocean's song!—what time can e'er efface
The feelings raised, as by a magic spell,
At such a time—for evermore to dwell
Deep in the breast! Would that our hearts might be
As temples, by God's hand prepared as well
To tune to sounds of holiest harmony
Each wave that enters there from Life's tumultuous sea!

XLIX.

But here we may not linger, for the shades[5]
Of eve are gathering round us; and, once more,
We bound across the billow Dimly fades
The ocean scene; but morning shall restore
To view full many a wild and wondrous shore;
While from Loch Sunart's banks my way I hold,
The rugged hills of Moidart to explore,
And tread that grove where, to his chiefs, of old,[5]
The young adventurous Prince his daring purpose told.

THE HIGHLANDS.*

CANTO SECOND.

I.

THE morn rose wrapt in clouds; the murky sky
Deluged the earth; and, for to-day, I deemed,
No smile from nature's face would cheer mine eye
But soon from heaven a ray of promise beamed,
And the glad hills looked out, and brightly gleamed;
And forth I fared rejoicing, for I found
That down the mountains now the torrents streamed
With livelier mirth and more exulting bound,
And a new beauty seemed diffused o'er all around.

II.

And then I thought how oft it thus hath been—
When clouds of woe and sadness hovering o'er,
Obscured and darkened all this mortal scene,
That even those evils we could most deplore
Have been but found some new delight to pour
Around our path, and bid those streams of bliss,
Whose current ran so languidly before,
Abound with rapture; and I learned from this,
With more submissive heart the chastening rod to kiss.

III.

And, even as these descending rains, methought,
Bid the rude mountains, late so bare and dry,
Pour down such bright cascades as might have brought
Crowds from afar to gaze with wondering eye,
Owning that not man's proudest works can vie
With aught the Almighty's hand hath made—even so
When pours the quickening influence from on high
From hearts once hard, and stern, and dry, will flow
Such pure and living streams as nature ne'er may show.

IV.

And now the slowly rising clouds disclose[1]
A glorious scene. The sun, with struggling pride,
Bursts forth, and in his beams the water glows.
The distant islands scattered far and wide,
The rugged mountains rising by my side,
Trees fresh and fragrant from the recent rain,
The long low heave of the returning tide,
And all the glory of the boundless main,
Invite me forth to muse—nor is their call in vain.

V.

There, lulled in sweet repose, yet not to sleep,
But to a soft and pensive stillness, lies
The tranquil bosom of the silent deep,
Reflecting now the glory of the skies,
Now clothed by fleeting clouds in darker dyes.
Thus when the calm, unruffled breast surveys
Man's *mortal* and *immortal* destinies,
Now with triumphant joy the soul can gaze,
Deep melancholy now the musing spirit sways.

VI.

The sun is in his strength! and still the ocean
Lies hushed and waveless; and the air, whose *sound*
Alone we hear when in its wild commotion
Sweeps o'er the trembling earth, now, gently bound
In that pervading calm which spreads around,
And by the sun's "clear heat" informed, though filled
With no polluting vapours from the ground,
Stands *visible*, while thus so sweetly stilled,[1]
Quivering, as if with joy its conscious being thrilled.

VII.

And even as, calmly musing here I see,
Strangely revealed unto the eye of sense,
That element whose viewless energy
Types forth the strong yet unseen influence
Of that pervading Spirit which doth dispense
Its healing balm unto a world that else
Were one dire mass of moral pestilence—
Where fevers, raging through each throbbing pulse,
Would madden every brain, and every frame convulse;

VIII.

So, o'er the pensive soul, in some calm hour
Of holy contemplation, oft is poured
The unseen Spirit's influence with such power,
And such deep feelings in his breast are stirred,
As lone he muses o'er the blessed Word,
That his rapt spirit is constrained to cry,
"Lord, by the hearing of the ear I've heard
Of Thee and of Thy works; but now mine eye
Doth see Thee; wherefore low in dust abased I lie."

IX.

The bûrning glory of the day is o'er;
The glory of its parting, too, is past;
And, as I stand upon the silent shore,
The glory of the night advances last;
Nor, lovely night, doth the sweet power thou hast
O'er musing hearts to either rival yield,
For thought expands more lofty and more vast
When earth is almost by thy veil concealed,
While what rêmains to view is by *such* light revealed.

And when the moon, like a pale pensive maid,
Glides through yon star-flowered fields with gentle pace—
Now dimmed by shadowing clouds, now full displayed—
How sweet to gaze upon her placid face,
And in her varying features seek to trace
The varied thoughts that in her spirit seem
To dwell! Now sadness will to joy give place,
Chased from her heart by some delightful dream,
Which soothingly appears upon her soul to beam;

XI.

And all her face is brightened with a glow
Of gladness.—But, again, some thought recalls
The consciousness of all her secret woe;
Deep melancholy o'er her spirit falls,
And gloom sits on her brow. At intervals,
Thus, as with sympathising heart we gaze
With still renewed delight that never palls,
O'er her mild face some new expression plays,
Which seems to tell the thoughts our own rapt soul conveys.

XII.

The rolling clouds that veiled the morning sky,
And wrapt in awful gloom the hills below;
The beams of glory bursting from on high,
And glistering o'er the torrent's silvery flow;
The genial warmth of day; the gorgeous glow
Of sunset, varied by the glimmering sheen
Of the pale moon, whose rays have power to throw
The mantle of enchantment o'er the scene;
With these my converse hath to-day alternate been;

XIII.

And I have drunk their spirit, till it seems
As if my very soul were so pervaded,
And interfused, and mingled with the beams
Of the bright heaven, that, even had darkness shaded
This region now, it yet could scarce have faded
From my mind's inward consciousness, but still
To my rapt spirit, though by sense unaided,
Each dark and distant isle, each rugged hill,
Had stood conspicuous forth, obedient to my will.

XIV.

But now so mild and shadowy is the scene—
So softly harmonised is all below
With that most spiritual light and most serene
Wherewith yon lovely orb her path doth strew—
That scarce my wondering soul appears to know
Whether in truth the solid earth I tread,
And hear with outward sense the ocean's flow,
And view the glittering sea before me spread,
Or whether but in dreams my soul be hither led.

XV.

If 'tis a dream, oh! let me not too soon [2]
Awake, to find the sweet illusion fade!
For, be it truth or fancy, the bright moon,
Whose magic beams have all this scene arrayed
With soul-entrancing beauty, hath displayed,
Moored by the shore, the substance it may be—
Or, if I dream, the semblance or the shade—
Of a good boat, prepared, methinks, for me,
While gently breathes the gale to waft me o'er the sea.

And meet it is, at such a pensive hour,
Amid such circumstance of mystic glory,
To seek that wondrous isle, where nature's power
Hath wrought in every cliff and promontory,
And hill of iron peak, and lonely corrie,
With hand now sportive, now sublimely bold;
And where each glen and cavern hath its story
That tells how mortals warred, or how, of old,
Spirits unseen with men dark converse wont to hold.

XVII.

But now again the morning sun discloses
The scene that dimly glimmered through the veil
Of night. Before us the calm sea reposes,
And o'er its placid breast full many a sail
Glides softly. Rising in their strength, we hail
The rugged hills that gird the coast beyond;
While, round us, the fair woods of Armidale
Constrain our steps to linger, with a fond
And sweet delay awhile; but we must break that bond

XVIII.

For scenes yet lie before us that have power
To rule the spirit with a sterner sway,
Where the dark Coolins in wild glory tower.
Yet, ere we take o'er moss and moor our way,
Pause we a little moment to survey
The lovely prospect that here greets our eyes,
Gazing from thy green heights Isle Oransay,
Where calm the glistening sea before us lies;
Then on to where the hills in gloomier pride arise.

XIX.

And now again upon the smiling deep!
Swift plies the brawny Gael each glancing oar,
And chants his Highland ditty, while we sweep
Round the bold cliffs that guard the craggy shore.
Hushed is the sleeping ocean's wonted roar;
But the deep caves and shattered rocks attest
The power wherewith, full oft, his billows pour.
And now the solemn Scavaig's lonely breast[3]
Receives us, and amid the circling hills we rest.

XX.

Hush! for we hear the voice of nature speak,
And feel that now she must be heard alone.
How harshly sounds man's voice—how poor and weak
While *she* sends forth from her majestic throne
Of everlasting hills that voice whose tone,
Thrilling our listening hearts with holy awe,
Bids our rapt spirits the dread presence own
Of Him "who setteth fast the hills," and draw
In speechless reverence near, as if His form we saw!

XXI.

Yet, 'mid such scenes of dread while mute we stand,
'Tis not alone in soul-subduing fear
That we shall feel and own the mighty hand
Of God upon us, for, though dark and drear
The cliffs that compass us around appear,
Even these can speak of heaven's protecting grace;
And still more sweetly sounds the promise here,
That "The munition of rocks shall be the place
Of his defence" who seeks Jehovah's glorious face.

XXII.

'Twere well to linger here, and silently
To muse, till night's descending shades should throw
A deep and solemn gloom across the sky,
Congenial with the gloom that rests below,
And mark the mountains as they seem to grow
To wilder grandeur and more awful height:
But, ere the sun be hidden, I must go
To view that wild retreat where ancient night
In yon dark cavern dwells—and startle her with light.

XXIII.

Lo! where the ocean pours with sullen dash [4]
Through the long echoing vault his restless wave,
We bid the glare of many torches flash
O'er the bright arches of the glittering cave,
Pillar, and frieze, and plinth, and architrave,
Of purest marble formed, which all appear
In order due, from vestibule to nave;
As if the sea-nymphs had been taught to rear
A palace for themselves, of gorgeous structure here.

XXIV.

If so it be, 'twere reason to believe
That 'tis their wail, upon the breezes borne,
The passing seaman seems to hear at eve
Hence issuing forth; for cause have they to mourn
The glories of their dwelling reft and torn
By rude and ruthless hands; but I would lay
A heavier charge 'gainst those who thus have shorn
These chambers of their splendour; I would say
Ye sin against a power of no fictitious sway.

XXV.

Great are thy works, O Lord, and manifold;
Sought out they are, with calm, inquiring eye,
By them to whom 'tis pleasure to behold
The wonders of thy power, that treasured lie
In unsunned depths. But hence! all ye who pry
And peep through nature's secrets, like a child
That breaks his toy, all idly searching why
And whence the mimic sound whereat he smiled.
Hence! for whate'er ye touch is by your hands defiled!

XXVI.

But now from these dark spirit-haunts restored [5]
To homes where kindly-hearted mortals dwell,
I list, while, at his hospitable board,
Strange tales of these wild scenes my host will tell,—
Of what one night the love-lorn swain befel, [4]
Who, home returning, pale and breathless, told
How fiends, in shape like dogs, did round him yell,
While on his frame, all numbed by breezes cold,
A female form, most like his love's, laid ruthless hold.

XXVII.

Or how the mariner, on Ronin's* coast,
His moored boat watching by the moon's pale light,
Lest by the dashing waves it should be tossed
On the dark rocks, saw with prophetic sight
A coffin o'er it stretched—and swooned with fright.
Nor did his drear and boding vision fail
Of its accomplishment. The blustering night
We thus beguile with many a wondrous tale,
And with the morning sun new scenes of grandeur hail.

XXVIII.

Now fare thee well, loved island; I depart[6]
For scenes of richer verdure it may be,
But never shall I find the simple heart
And generous bosom purer than with thee.
Sternly thy hills arise and ruggedly,
But warmly glows full many a gentle breast
Amid thy gloomiest scenes;—then take from me
A fond adieu: may heaven's best blessing rest
On thee, till thou becom'st an "island of the blest."

XXIX.

Now, struggling 'mid the floods that, strong and deep,[7]
Rush 'tween th' opposing shores, my bark hath won
Thy verdant shores, Glenelg: and now I keep
My onward course, till, glistening in the sun,
Whose parting beams have clothed the mountains dun
In robes of purple, thy sweet face I hail,
Smiling and calm, Loch Duich, and upon
Thy peaceful banks I rest me, in a vale
Of tranquil loveliness,—the wood-bestrewn Kintail.

* Rum.

XXX.

And morning finds me on the hills again,[8]
Oft pausing to survey the scene below;
Till now my upward steps that spot attain
Where Glomach's glittering waters gently flow,
Like one that laughs at fears of coming woe,
While on destruction's brink he dreaming lies,
Till, all at once, down, down the abyss they go,
Lost in its dismal depths, from whence our eyes,
Awe-struck, behold the smoke of their great torment rise.

XXXI.

Away! and let me wander where the hills[9]
Gird wild Loch Torridon, till now I stand
Beside that cliff-encompassed lake, which fills[10]
Beyond all other in this teeming land,
The musing soul with feelings of the grand
And sternly glorious, not unmingled oft—
And most when eve doth o'er the scene expand
Her dewy wings, and rests serene aloft—
With thoughts more sweetly calm, feelings more mild and soft.

XXXII.

Far let me wander down thy craggy shore,
With rocks and trees bestrewn, dark Loch Maree,
Till that green isle I view, whence, gazing o'er[11]
Thy placid flood, long looked the prince to see,
If yet th' expected signal told that she,
His own loved princess, his betrothed bride
Drew near, his own for evermore to be;
Then, when the black flag he afar descried,
In heedless sport displayed, sank shuddering down and died.

XXXIII.

In rugged grandeur by the placid lake,
Rise the bold mountain-cliffs, sublimely rude.
A pleasing contrast, each with each, they make;
And, when in such harmonious union viewed,
Each with more powerful charms appears imbued.
Even thus it is, methinks, with mingling hearts;
Though different far in nature and in mood,
A blessed influence each to each imparts,
Which softens and subdues, yet weakens not, nor thwarts.

XXXIV.

How strange the varied thoughts that haunt the soul,
Fantastic now, now solemn and profound,
As long I gaze upon the clouds that roll
Up the deep glen, and gird yon mountain round,
Which seems like a young world, new born and wound
In swaddling bands, and by its mother Earth
Nursed in her downy bosom, while a sound,
Now like an infant's wailing voice comes forth
From its dark breast,—and now it seems the voice of mirth.

XXXV.

Such wayward fancies in my mind will rise, [12]
As in my onward course I pause a while
'Mid deeper thoughts, and turn my musing eyes
Back on the loaming hills that, pile on pile,
Mount to the welkin; and I thus beguile
With random thoughts my solitary way,
Else all uncheered save by the pensive smile,
O'er the long line of lakes that seems to play,
Soft gleaming in the light of the departing day.

XXXVI.

But these are passed, and now the cheerful morn [13]
Leads my glad footsteps through a livelier scene,
Where birchen groves the teeming banks adorn,
With silver stem and small leaves fresh and green.
Here foaming falls flash bright with glistening sheen;
There sweet Loch Echiltie enchants my sight,
Smiling with face so lovely and serene,
'Mid hills so glorious, and 'neath skies so bright,
The very trees around seem thrilling with delight.

XXXVII.

And onward still through a fair glen, that seems [14]
Like a great peaceful Paradise, I go.
Round me, far stretching woods and rocks, and streams;
Beside me, the deep Conan's tranquil flow.
But, more than all, it glads my soul to know
That, 'mid those scenes through which my steps are wending,
The trees of righteousness abundant grow;
And oft from this calm vale is heard ascending
The praise of thousand hearts with Nature's anthem blending.

XXXVIII.

Here let me sit upon this heathy mound,
And commune with the glorious company
Of giant mountains rising all around,
And seeming each to Fancy's musing eye
With conscious life imbued. Some, shooting high
Their bare and rocky summits, seem to seek,
As if by one wild heave, to reach the sky,
Showing their rugged bosoms dark and bleak,
Like stern Ambition's breast, that counts all softness weak.

XXXIX.

Not so, with restless effort, rude and wild,
Spurning the hills below in lordly pride,
Majestic Wyvis soars; serene and mild
As grand he rises; on his grassy side
The flocks find pasture, and the waters glide
Calm down his verdant slopes; nor doth he raise
One proud peak to the sky, but vast and wide
Swells his broad bosom; yet in vain the blaze
Of summer on the snows that crown his summit plays.

XL.

And now, awhile, beside this placid lake
Calm let me rest, for gathering clouds forbid
My eager steps the upward path to take
To where the mountain heights in mist are hid.
Yet let the joy suffice me, here, amid
The whispering woods to rove that clothe the shore
Of the still lake whose waters, dark and red,[8]
From earth's rent bosom gushed, they say of yore,
What time the offended sprite her breast in anger tore.

XLI.

Tracing the shady pathway, now I climb
With pensive steps the wild and woody height
Where burst at once the lovely and sublime,
Each in its own perfection, on my sight.
There tower the distant mountains in their might;
Here smiles the lake most peacefully below.
Yet vainly these conspiring charms invite
My steps to linger here, for I must go
To that still lovelier scene where Beauly joys to flow.

XLII.

With calm, majestic sweep the river winds [15]
Around a lofty isle with verdure crowned;
But soon a bolder course its current finds,
And thunders on with hoarse impetuous sound.
Stupendous cliffs its mazy windings bound;
Fantastic rocks amid its waters rise;
Luxuriant trees bedeck the enchanted ground,
Where fixed we stand, in mute and still surprise,
Chained to the magic spot with never-sated eyes.

XLIII.

From the cliff's verge how fearful to look down
Upon the silent floods, where, dark and deep,
Beneath the rocks that round them sternly frown,
Like tower and battlement and donjon keep
Of some strong castle of old days, they sleep,
Silent as waters in a moat might be;
Then turn to look where o'er the rocks they leap
Roaring, as if the flood-gates of a sea
Were opened, and its waves rushed down with furious
glee!

XLIV.

Still let me wander where thy waters glide,[16]
Sweet Beauly, till their heaving breast they spread
Wide 'neath the sky. Nor let me turn aside
To mingle with the living, ere I tread
Culloden's silent moor, and with the dead
Hold awful converse, in the burial-place
Of thousand gallant hearts, whose blood was shed
In vain, blind, faithful struggle for—a race
Who were their country's curse, perfidious, proud and
base!

XLV.

Oh! what a scene wherein, in saddest thought,
To muse—not o'er the wasting scourge of war—
But o'er the direr ruin sin hath wrought
In that whose overthrow is sadder far
Than slaughtered thousands,—ruined empires are!
How hath the arch-deceiver—not in vain—
Striven with deep malice to pervert and mar
Man's noblest, warmest feelings, and to train
His blind, infatuate dupes to prop his tyrant reign!

XLVI.

By various wiles the subtle tempter works
In various bosoms:—here to open strife
He urges brethren on;—there darkly lurks[17],
The midnight murderer with his treacherous knife,
Plotting against his guest's—his monarch's life,
In Cawdor's gloomy towers, whose chambers now
My steps are pacing: and the unnatural wife,[11]
From woman changed to fiend, with scowling brow
Rebukes his fears, and calls to mind his desperate vow.

THE HIGHLANDS.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

FROM these stern regions let me turn to hail [1]
A joyful scene. Now take me to thy breast,
O fair Loch Ness, and bear me down the vale
That in thy presence seems for ever blessed,—
Its gladness still in radiant smiles confessed;
And let me gaze and listen like a child—
A child of Nature, and still pleased the best
When her known voice I hear, or breathing mild,
Or, as from some deep dell it sounds, sublimely wild.

II.

There soars the huge Mealfourvonie, and here
Glen Urquhart's far retiring woods recall [2]
The time when, wandering there, my pensive ear
Delighted listened to the stirring brawl
Of Coiltie's roaring waters, where they fall,
Rushing adown the steep in pride and glory;
And when I first beheld the crumbling wall
Of the old tower, whose ruin, frail and hoary,
Looks down with ghastly smile from this bold promontory.

III.

But past these frowning crags we swiftly glide
O'er the calm bosom of the swelling lake;
And soon, debarking from its gleaming tide, [3]
Our upward way through this green dell we take,
With eager expectation all awake,
Till downward winding o'er the rocky steep,
We stand where Foyers' thundering waters shake
The circling cliffs with their terrific leap;
Ere goaded to wild rage, through the rent chasm they
sweep.

IV.

Look up to where the stream descendeth sheer
'Mid rocks that close around and tower o'erhead!
Even such that cloudy pillar might appear
Which forth from Egypt God's own people led,
When, in an hour of triumph—and of dread,
The astonished sea revealed its rocky caves,
And op'ed a path where they dry-shod might tread,
While round them, like these cliffs, arose the waves,
To them a strong defence—a tomb to Pharaoh's slaves.

V.

Or gaze from the wild heights whence headlong
streams
The living torrent in a foaming tide.
Here, 'mid the o'ergazing trees, methinks it seems
Like some strong spirit whose delight and pride
Is still, 'mid scenes of turmoil, to deride
The thoughts of danger,—glorying in whate'er
Gives scope to the wild mood that scorns to glide
Through the calm paths where there is nought to dare,
And rushes on to meet what timid souls would scare.

VI.

And, as we stand upon its giddy verge,
A kindred impulse by our soul is caught,
Which seems, as by strong sympathy, to urge
To a more rapid flow the stream of thought;
And all the feelings of the breast are brought
To swell the whirling torrent, by whose force
A deepening channel through the soul is wrought
For each succeeding wave, whate'er its source,
Be it of joy or grief, love, hatred, or remorse.

VII.

But mark, where in the placid lake below[4]
The agitated stream is seeking rest,
How calmly, yet how deep, its waters flow!
Such is the calm wherewith the anxious breast
Which troublous thoughts have stirred will oft be blessed—
A calm not like the apathetic sleep
Of souls where thought is an unwelcome guest—
But that sweet calm, that peace serene and deep
In which the God of peace the trusting soul will keep.

VIII.

Even such a peace was thine, and so serene,
Daughter of Foyers, when on yon green height,
Thy favourite haunt, thou sat'st, while all this scene
Of lake and hill and grove, now gleaming bright,
Now darkly solemn, charmed thy pensive sight,
And filled thee with such holy thought and feeling,
That in that spot, where thus in purest light
Thy God had oft his glory been revealing,
Thou bad'st them lay their bones, when death was o'er thee stealing.

IX.

Dear spot, to all thy loveliness farewell;
Now other scenes attract my musing eye.
Let me not pass thy lone and bowery dell,
Thy cliffs and gushing streams in silence by,
Most calm retreat, most beautiful Ault-Sigh;[5]
The very spirit of repose seems sleeping,
Folded in thy dark breast; and, towering high,
Proud hills, with red rocks from their bosoms peeping
Through their green mantles, o'er thy peace their
watch are keeping.

X.

Yet do thy banks, now smiling so serene,
Recall that age of wild, remorseless feud
When, in hot haste, rushed one to this fair scene
With hands in ruthless slaughter deep imbrued,
And by the blood-avenger close pursued.
With desperate bound across the chasm he sprung;
Then, turning from its trunk, the frail branch hewed,
Where, following reckless, his pursuer clung,
And plunged him in the abyss, which with his death-
shriek rung.

XI.

Thy glades, Glenmorriston, recall the days[6]
When I rejoiced their green depth to explore;—
To thread thy mazy forests, and to gaze
Where pours thy rivers down with furious roar.
Here frowned the giant rock—there growled the boar,
And the affrighted stream with one wild leap
Rushed down between; then hurrying sought the
shore
Of the calm lake, whose bosom, dark and deep,
Received its troubled tide, and hushed its waves to
sleep.

XII.

Dark lowering clouds begloom the glorious scene
Where the deep Garry's sounding flood is poured,
As if, though still luxuriant, fresh and green,
The glen, with fond remembrance, yet deplored
The absent footsteps of its ancient lord.
Yet didst thou smile, sweet vale, though pensively,
On that remembered day when I adored,
With all thy simple people, Him whose eye
Still watches o'er thy chief 'neath yon far foreign sky.

XIII.

Now where the monarch mountain proudly towers[8]
The glorious Nevis—round him darkly close
The brooding tempests; and the ceaseless showers
Descend; and still more deep the river grows.
Which in its strength awhile still freshly flows,
Far rushing through thy briny flood, Lochie;
Like one who, strong in faith, unsullied goes
Through a polluted world. This gloom, we feel,
Adds grandeur to the scene which it doth half conceal.

XIV.

Grieve not when tempests rave and darkly roll
Th' embattled clouds along the mountain's side
These towering hills are like the dauntless soul
Of Caledonia, and when tempests chide
And winds assail them, then in strength and pride
They rise, and seem more glorious than before.
See! down each rugged steep with foaming tide
Rush the retreating waters: so of yore
Fled the assailing foe from Scotia's rock-bound shore.

Unchanging as the grandeur of the soul
Is thy sublimity, most wondrous land,
Beyond the reach of season's wide control:
Nor then alone appear'st thou fair and grand
When spring hath decked thee with her magic hand
In robes of richest green, or when thy vales
By summer's soft and genial breeze is fanned,
Or when the voice of autumn's pensive gales
Sadly through sombre glade and dark-brown forest wails.

XVI.

I love to see thee in the time of storms,
When winter o'er thee her rough mantle throws:
Then more majestic rise the giant forms
Of thy bold hills, bestrewed with drifted snows,
Like an unbending soul in midst of woes,
Grander than when the sun of gladness shone,—
Like an undaunted hero 'mid the foes
That press around him as he stands alone,
And seems as if his might had with his danger grown.

XVII.

Even such as now, by tempests darkened o'er
And wrapt in gloomy mists, the scene appeared
When late I held my way along thy shore,
O wild Lochiel, and heeded not nor feared
The storms that o'er thy troubled breast careered,
As that lone spot I passed, to which, 'tis said,
From where of old the kingly towers were reared,
A mournful train the royal dead conveyed,
Thence borne to rest beneath Iona's sacred shade.

XVIII.

Onward I roved till on Lochshiel's bleak banks
I saw where first upon the breeze was thrown [9]
The Prince's standard, 'mid his gathering ranks;—
Where first, foredoomed, the brave Lochiel led on
The stalwart bands of faithful Cameron.
And onward still, o'er mount and moor, I sped, [10]
Till on that rugged coast I wandered lone,
Which Highland hearts deem hallowed by the tread
Of that loved Prince for whom their fathers' blood was shed.

XIX.

The sun was pouring o'er the western wave
The pensive hues of evening, as I stood
Upon a shore whose every cliff and cave
Is rife with recollections that give food
To the deep feelings of that musing mood
Which such an hour induces; for the swell
And dash of breaking billows from a flood
Tinged with that fading light, accorded well
With the dark tale of woe these rocks and cliffs can tell:

XX.

For he, the Prince to Highland bosoms dear,
Who, flushed with hope, upon that rugged shore
Had but so late begun his wild career
Of desperate warfare,—that short struggle o'er,
His hopes all quenched on dark Culloden's moor—
A homeless outcast, wandered there again.
Yet, while for him I mourned, I could adore
That power which freed our country from the chain
Still hugged by those who there that Prince's faith retain.

XXI.

For still doth darkness o'er the region brood,
And superstition hold her gloomy reign;
And still the virgin stands, as erst she stood,
The queen and leader of a ghostly train
Of interceding saints, who yet remain
The demigods of that deluded race;
And all the lying wonders, false and vain,
That the dark places of the earth deface
There, in this land of light, to Scotia's shame have place.

XXII.

But now my wandering thoughts I must recall (11)
To the dark scene around me, for I go
To tread that vale the most sublime of all
That Scotia's bosom shows,—the dread Glencoe,
Where, frowning dismal o'er the pass below
Towers each black cliff, one huge, unshapen block,
Crowned evermore with wreaths of purest snow,
As if some mountain range of boundless rock
Had here been rent in twain by some great earthquake's shock.

XXIII.

O'er the wild-hills the shades of eve are falling,
And thick and boding clouds begin to brood,
Those deeds of darkness to my mind recalling
Which dyed with crimson Cona's roaring flood,
And made this rugged vale a "field of blood,"—
A scene of twofold horror! Nor doth aught
That speaks of gladness or of peace intrude
To charm away one melancholy thought
By fancy conjured up, or by dark memory brought.

XXIV.

Amid the desert scenes stern winter's voice
Was heard, and oft his pipe was sounded shrill,
And with wild glee here seemed he to rejoice
Again to visit each familiar hill,
Whose gloomy brow, whereon to look might chill
The heart, seemed so congenial to his own;
And here he roamed and rioted at will;
And from these cliffs, where he had reared his throne,
Looked on the desolate realm, before his feet laid prone.

XXV.

Such was the scene when to this rugged glen
A warrior band in friendly seeming came;
And, though in them Glencoe's devoted men
Beheld the foes of all who bore their name,
Yet simple faith allowed the stranger's claim
To hospitable cheer and welcome kind,—
Undreaming that a Highland hand could shame
The ancient faith—the sacred ties that bind
The guest to him beside whose hearth he hath reclined.

XXVI.

Insidious as the serpent creeps and lies
Close to the bird it destines for its prey,
And by the fascination of its eyes
Charms all its spell-bound victim's fears away,
And, like the serpent in man's darkest day,
Most subtle and most full of fiendish guile,
The treacherous band maintained a fair display
Of courteous kindness and conversed awhile
In bland and friendly tone, with hypocritic smile.

XXVII.

Within the opened door of every cot
The brimming cup of peace and joy went round;
Long cherished feuds awhile were all forgot,
The memory of past strife in mirth was drowned.
And 'mid the revellers could there one be found
By the foul spirits of darkness so possessed,—
So sunk in dastard baseness,—who could wound
With treacherous hand one unsuspicious breast
Where generous faith had laid all watchful fears to
rest?

XXVIII.

Would that the blush of shame from history's page
Could blot the horrors of that night of woes!
Dark are her tales of war's tumultuous rage,
And the hot strife of fierce encountering foes;
But nought like this her annals can disclose:
Methinks these rocks still echo with the dread
And piercing cry that in deep midnight rose,
As when, among the homes o'er Egypt spread,
There was not one but there the first-born child lay
dead.

XXIX.

Nor fell the warriors of the tribe alone
Beneath the ruthless murderer's reeking knife,
Nor rose alone the agonizing groan
From the rent breast of mother, sister, wife,
When sunk their guardians in the short vain strife;
In earnest supplication while they knelt
Pleading with tears for husband's, brother's life,
Themselves the base assassin's vengeance felt,
Whose heart nor youth nor age nor innocence could melt.

XXX.

Through scenes of softer power the morning leads[12]
Here, spreading gladness o'er the vales around,
The placid Orchay flows through loveliest meads:
There stands the giant Cruachan, snow-crowned,
From whose dark, boding breast a wailing sound
Tells when the brooding storm prepares to break.
And, stetched before me, hushed in peace profound,
Gleaming in sunshine, lies fair Eva's* lake,
Whose shores full many a thought of other days awake.

XXXI.

Thus, gazing on the grey dismantled tower [13]
Of Caölchairn, its crumbling piles recall
The tale that tells how, in a festive hour,
When all was merry in the castle hall,
And rang with sounds of revelry the wall
Where late a weeping widow mourned the blight
Of all her heart held dearest, in the fall,
By Moslem hand, amid the distant fight,
Of her loved absent lord—the good and gallant knight.

XXXII.

There came a wanderer to the castle gate;
A weary man with travel worn was he.
The menials saw him at the threshold wait;
Mute gazing on that scene of festal glee,
And questioned him of what his wish might be.
"Drink for my thirst, and for my hunger food."
And food and drink they gave right heartily,
But still the brimming cup untasted stood;
A mendicant, I ween, he seemed right strange of mood.

* Loch Arve.

XXXIII.

Nor will he drink but at the lady's hands;
And she, in mirthful humour, tripping light
From forth the festive hall, before him stands,
In bridal garments gay all proudly dight;
And, when he hears her gentle voice invite,
He takes the goblet up, and drains it dry.
But in the emptied cup what meets her sight
When to her hand he gives it back? and why
Turns pale her blooming cheek when it hath caught
her eye?

XXXIV.

Ah! well she knows the ring she gave her lord
When for far distant lands he took his way;
But years have passed since he by Paynim sword,
As rumour said, had fallen in bloody fray,
And she has sworn to give her hand to-day
To him who, mourning, brought the tidings home.
—Caitiff! thy life's-blood for that lie shall pay,
For, warned by dreams, amid the halls of Rome,
Of thy dark wiles, behold, Sir Colin's self hath come!

XXXV.

The Isle of Druids and the Lovely Isle,[14]
And, lovelier still, the tower-crowned Isle of Heath,
Whose fruits to cull, and win his Mego's smile,
The dauntless lover dared the threatening death,
Till the huge guardian serpent did enwreath
Its coils around him,—All invite delay,
While from this height upon the lake beneath
I gaze;—but I must hasten on my way
By Aray's winding banks, much musing as I stray.

XXXVI.

Hail to thee, Inverary! hail, once more!—[15]
Again I stand amid the glorious scene
That spreads, Lochfyne, around thy lovely shore;—
Again I gaze upon thy face serene,
And plunge amid the woods, so dark and green,
Whose veteran trees have stood like guards around
The aged castle, now no longer seen,
And still survive to deck th' enchanted ground
Where nature's varied charms profusely strewn abound.

XXXVII.

Since last beside this glorious loch I stood,
Since last I wandered 'neath the pensive shade,
And through the winding depths of this dark wood,
O'er many a strange, wild path my steps have strayed,
And many a lovely scene have I surveyed;
Yet never have I found my wandering feet
By such a strong, constraining spell delayed,
Nor felt thy voice, oh Nature, fall so sweet
As 'mid the charms of this thine own beloved retreat.

XXXVIII.

Oh! well in such a scene might fancy deem
Dryads and wood-nymphs spent the cheerful day,
Or fairies sported in the moon's pale beam,
And gleeful spirits 'mid the twilight grey
Came forth along the river's bank to play;
But, more than all these joyous sprites, I love
As here at evening's pensive hour I stray,
Genius of holy thought, to bid *thee* rove
Companion of my way through the dark winding grove.

XXXIX.

Yes, lovely spirit, lead my wandering feet
Through every sweet sequestered haunt of thine;
And guide my steps to every favourite seat
Where oft thou lov'st to watch the day's decline,
Or gaze on the bright stars that softly shine
Where, 'mong the leafy trees, they find a way
Through which to pour their influence benign,—
So purely beaming that their every ray
Seems from thy heavenly home some message to convey.

XL.

Slow breaks the day and still,—but hark! the rush
Of many waters in the woody dell!
How sweet amid the morning's tranquil hush
The notes of their eternal music swell
Like voice of hermit in his lonely cell
Raising at day's first blush his matin-song:
Or like the hymn of wanderers forced to dwell
"In dens and caves of th' earth," yet waxing strong
Through faith to sing loud praise, 'mid suffering, shame and wrong.

Sudden peers forth amid the opening trees
The foaming fall which gleams more purely white
Amid the gloom. 'Tis thus that he who sees
This vain world's headlong course ere yet the light
Of God's prophetic Truth hath taught his sight
To look beyond this short life's weal or woe,
Marks but th' impetuous stream thus flashing bright
Nor heeds the deep and dark abyss below,
To which its waters rush with such tumultuous flow.

XLII.

Now, even as 'mid the rich domains of Thought[16]
Young roving Fancy, when at will she strays,
By sweet association oft is brought
To some fair scene, bright with celestial rays,
And with the mellowed light of bygone days;
So, half unconscious whither, as I glide
Through this deep winding wood's enchanted maze
A glorious scene at last is opened wide,
"Vale of the Silent Stream," I hail thy lake's calm tide.

XLIII.

In such a sweet and peaceful spot as this,
How many a dear and fondly cherished dream
Of tranquil joy and unmolested bliss
Swells on the musing soul! nor can we deem
That these are but a bright and transient gleam,
Bursting from 'mid the thick clouds that obscure
From mortal sight the world of bliss supreme.
Fond Fancy bids us hope that aught so pure,
So bright with rays of heaven, must like that heaven
endure.

XLIV.

But, ah! the sky is changed!—the dropping rain
Dimples the darkening lake, whose face so fair
And bright and placid all the day had lain.
Low, distant murmurs vibrate through the air,
Bidding us for the coming storm prepare.
Thus, when in pleasing dreams securely blest,
How oft will clouds of sorrow and of care
Cast their dark, boding shadow o'er the breast,
Bidding us rise and go—for this is not our rest.

XLV.

And must I leave this lovely vale, and gaze
No more on this fair scene that seems to glow,
Bright with the memories of bygone days
As with the lavish gifts of Nature?—No,
These shall be with me still where'er I go.
Dim fades upon my sight yon lordly pile;
Mine ear no longer lists yon torrent's flow;
But sweetly still upon my dreams shall smile
The glorious scenes and deeds linked with thy name,
Argyll.

XLVI.

The morning sun pours down his cheerful light, [17]
O fair Strachur, upon thy ancient wood,
Where I have joyed to stray, and on yon height
Where, gazing in deep thought, erewhile I stood:
But these, too, fade; and o'er the gleaming flood
Swift are we borne, 'mid scenes o'er which the soul
Long in delighted trance would seek to brood;
And now where rugged cliff and heathy knoll
Gird the wild shores of Bute, the winding waters roll.

XLVII.

On Clutha's banks, where oft I've loved to stray, [18]
Where oft my soul is wafted in my dreams,
Again I stand. O'er Kelburne's turrets grey,
'Mid woods embowered bright glow the evening beams.
The sighing gales,—the voice of gentle streams,
Now purling soft, now foaming in their fall,—
The setting sun, whose mellowed radiance gleams
On Fairlie Castle's old and ruined wall,
The memory of days of other years recall

XLVIII.

In the mild light the small waves gently roll,
Reflecting heaven in all its changing dyes:
A glorious image of the unfetter'd soul
Of Caledonia, the calm water lies,
Holding free, pure communion with the skies.
Yet, like that soul when swept impetuous o'er
By storms of wrath, once did these waves arise
To crush in their strong grasp, with furious roar,
The hosts of Scotia's foes, and dash them on the shore.

XLIX.

And see! stupendous swelling to the skies,
Arran lifts up each wild, gigantic height;
And, though all bleak and bare they seem to rise,
While distance makes them bolder to the sight,
Yet with a gentle voice do they invite
The soul that knows what fair and verdant vales
Rest 'mid these hills, and what a pure delight
Is felt, while wandering o'er these peaceful dales,
Illumined by the light of History's brightest tales:

L.

For there, no more afflicted and exiled,—
A fugitive o'er land and sea no more,—
Roaming no longer lone 'mid mountains wild,—
The Bruce, with shouts received upon the shore,
Saw all the faithful clans around him pour;
And, when from thence the mystic beacon's light
To glorious strife and toil had called him o'er,
Pursued his course, triumphant, bold and bright,
Till Scotland gained again her glory and her right.

THE HIGHLANDS.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

ONCE more among the mountains let me trace
The varied beauties of each green retreat.
Let Fancy lead me on from place to place,
For many a lovely valley may I greet,[1]
Where I may rove in musings calm and sweet.
These proud peaks rise no more in distant view.
The blooming heather is beneath my feet;
Loch Katrine lies before me, still and blue,
Guarded by heath-clad hills whose king is Benvenue.

II.

Come, ye whose mourning hearts by grief are torn,
Amid these scenes, with Faith, your teacher, rove;
List the glad songs that, at the rise of morn,
Burst, as yours yet shall burst, amid the grove;
See emblems in the hills that tower above
And seem the peaceful lake's repose to guard,
Of the unchanging strength of heavenly love,
And of that power which from your souls can ward
Each fierce, disturbing blast—blow it howe'er so hard.

III.

Yes, let your eyes, in pensive grief dejected,
Gaze on the bosom of this placid lake,
Where heaven's ethereal glories are reflected.
Let your afflicted soul its impress take;
And, guarded by that rock which nought can shake,
Unmoved let wrathful tempests o'er you sweep.
Let no rude gusts of fretful anger break
Your soul's repose; and,—be your grief as deep
As that calm lake,—oh! still your hearts as tranquil keep.

IV.

Thus, freed from passion's wild and lawless sway,
Even in the depths of your unfathomed woe,
Cheered by Religion's pure and peaceful ray,
Much of the joy of Heaven you here may know:—
Thus, in their holy calm, your hearts may glow
In that most pure and purifying light;
And, 'mid the bleak, dark scenes of earth below,
May draw their comfort from that sacred height
Which else the inward storm had hidden from your sight.

V.

With fair Loch Katrine two most beauteous lakes
Are linked by winding Teith's rejoicing stream;
And each such kindred loveliness partakes
That oft, methinks, hereafter shall they beam
In sweet, harmonious union on my dream;
Like three fair sisters who, though, each apart,
Lovely and pure, yet purer, lovelier seem,—
Not from the vain embellishments of art—
But from the flow of soul that links them, heart to heart.

VI.

To these mild smiling lakes a thousand rills
With joyful purlings wind their destined way,
For, 'mid the bristling woods and rugged hills,
So calm and pure and beautiful are they,
To them each mount his tribute loves to pay;
Even as rough Valour and uncultured Might
To Beauty's gentle, yet resistless sway,
And to fair modest Purity, delight
To pay an homage felt to be their sacred right.

VII.

And, as amid this sinful world the heart
Of Faith sends forth its silent prayers and sighs
That Heaven its richest blessing would impart
To all around, from these pure lakes arise
Soft, genial exhalations to the skies,
That thence in plenteous shower may come again
The dew that to the drooping flower supplies
New life,—the early and the latter rain,
That cheer the barren mount, and fertilize the plain.

VIII.

Less sweet my musings as o'er moss and moor [2]
I take my drear and solitary way;
But yet not long these gloomy thoughts endure,
For soon I see the fair Loch Ard display
Her placid bosom, 'mid a rich array
Of skirting woods, and isles that calmly rest
On the bright waters, gleaming in the ray
Of the descending sun; while in the West
The dark Benlomond rears far off his snowy crest.

IX.

'And now I rove upon thy peaceful shore,[3]
Monteith's sweet lake. The moon is in the sky
Shedding her mild and hallowed radiance o'er
Thy placid waters;—giving to the eye
The beauteous isles that in thy bosom lie,
Like some fair beings from a world of care
And sin dissevered by their purity;
While soft waves, wafted by the balmy air,
From them on all around a blessing seem to bear.

X.

Chief and most lovely of these verdant isles—
That well might seem the Islands of the Blest,—
Radiant with soft yet melancholy smiles,—
Image of holy peace—the "Isle of Rest"
Reclines upon the lake's pure, tranquil breast
A sacred place in bygone ages deemed—
For men deemed holy there, of old, possessed
Their calm abode.—Nor marvel if it seemed
That round that peaceful isle a heavenly lustre beamed!

XI.

And here it was the hapless Mary dwelt,
In the sweet hour of life's unchequered morn,
Ere yet the pangs of blighted hope she felt,—
Ere yet her breast by kindred hands was torn.
And here she planted for herself a thorn,[4]
To spread its branches 'mid her circling bower,—
Sad emblem of that chaplet to be worn
By her fair brow for many a future hour—
The bright but thorny crown of dignity and power.

XII.

The grey remains of cloister and of cell [4]
Are dimly seen by the soft, dubious light
Of the pale moon, whose rays are fitted well
To call to mind that long and dreary night
Which hid the Sun of Righteousness from sight
Of men:—when His pure truth from earth was driven;
And adoration, by eternal right
His only, by blind man to *her* was given
Whom Ignorance and Craft proclaimed the Queen of Heaven.

XIII.

But rose that Sun at last, nor, from above,
Shone His pure beams o'er Scotia's hills in vain,
For now domestic unity and love
Dwell in each pastoral glen and fertile plain,
That once full oft were strewed with brethren slain.
Pure flow the streams that once were wont to roll
Their turbid floods, ensanguined, to the main;
And flows as pure the current of the soul,
Whose fierce and lawless pride once joyed to spurn control.

XIV.

But, though its waters, o'er a rugged course,
With loud, tumultuous roar no longer sweep,
Yet unabated is its latent force:
And,—rolling now more slow and broad and deep,
From height to depth no longer forced to leap,
As in the days of old,—although it seem
Along its path more sluggishly to creep,
Then o'er wild rocks it rushed, a mountain stream,
But *now* it bids its banks with peaceful plenty teem.

Time was when every plain and glen and hill
Was the abode of anarchy,—when Night,
That now reposes here so calm and still,
Full oft was startled by the beal-fire's light,—
That blazed alarm abroad from height to height,—
Or by the cot or castle wrapt in flame:
For then these regions knew no law but might,
Nor aught these fierce and restless minds could tame
Till polity close linked with pure religion came.

XVI.

Far other sounds than wails of savage grief,—
Than the tumultuous din of feudal frays,
Or coronach loud raised for fallen chief,
And sweeter far than bard's triumphant lays,
Were heard amid these glens in bygone days.
Full oft these mountain echoes have been stirred
By the rejoicing song of humble praise.
Full oft the sound of the peace-speaking Word
And the calm voice of prayer these solitudes have heard.

XVII.

Our fathers, 'mid these wilds content to roam,
With conscience unrestrained, here fled exiled
From their domestic hearth, their peaceful home;
" Killed all day long," afflicted and reviled,
Here, amid rocks on rocks tumultuous piled,
They sought a refuge from the hands of men
Whose hearts more cold—whose passions were more wild
Than the rude tempest and the rocky den,—
Nor left them even secure to roam o'er hill and glen.

XVIII.

Together met where the wild cliffs arise
Bleak, barren, and precipitous around,—
Giving alone to view the glowing skies,
And their own cold, dark breasts; in these they found
Emblems of man's frail power, which thus might bound
Their wanderings upon *earth*—but ne'er remove
Their souls from sight of *heaven*,—which if it frowned,
Or if it smiled, still looked on them in love,—
Nor hide from them the light that cheered them from
above.

XIX.

Oh! well the Scottish heart delights to trace
The footsteps of the holy and the brave
Of other times, and holy seems the place
That they have trod; each glen, each rocky cave,
Which e'er of old a lonely refuge gave
To Scotia's sons when foes around them pressed
Who thirsted for their life's blood,—or the grave
Marked by some rude, grey stone, where now they rest
Is dear to that warm heart, and with a sigh is blessed.

XX.

And to the mind where hallowed feelings reign,
Dearest of all those solitudes are felt,
Where, persecuted, mocked and scorned in vain,
By men whose hearts no sympathies could melt,
On the green sod the adoring throng have knelt,
Enduring glad the cross of pain and shame;
Or those abodes where holy men * once dwelt
Who kindled first and spread the Gospel's flame,
Ere its pure light was dimmed by clouds from Rome
that came.

* The Culdees.

XXI.

Yes, consecrate, O Scotia, is thy sod,
Not by a superstition gross and blind;
Nor do we vainly deem that the Great God,
To Freedom has thy mountain homes assigned;
Not Freedom which but breaks the chains that bind
The body,—but that Freedom which awoke
Thee to cast off those fetters of the mind
Which still enthral the nations in their yoke,
And bids thy sons still scorn the chains their fathers broke.

XXII.

To thee most bounteous hath been Nature's hand,
And manifold the glories that abound
Throughout thy regions, thou most glorious land.
Profuse the beauties she hath strewn around,
Making thee seem as all enchanted ground;
Yet, sure, the spots where thou seem'st loveliest far
Are where the Beauty of Holiness is found;
Where shines upon thee the bright Morning Star,
And where sin least intrudes, thy loveliness to mar.

XXIII.

And in this glorious temple Nature rears
Thus wondrous fair beneath these northern skies,
What object dearest, loveliest appears
To Faith and Hope, and most attracts their eyes?
The Village Kirk, the altar whence arise
Praises and prayers,—incense God loves to claim
Far more than any costly sacrifice;—
Where are oblations kindled at the flame
Of that bright Truth which pure from his own presence came.

XXIV.

Ye lovely sanctities that clothe the hearth!
Where are ye purer, holier kept than here?
Where does a milder light of social mirth
And warm affection shine from eyes more clear,
Than those whose beams the Highland fireside cheer?
With purer influence where does faith impart
Those joys that flow from godly love and fear
Than 'neath these humble roofs, where, void of art,
The voice of prayer and praise comes thrilling from the heart?

XXV.

Speed then no more the fiery cross that sped
Erewhile to call to arms the warrior clan;
But speed the cross whereon the Saviour bled,
Pouring his life's blood for rebellious man.
Swift as o'er moss and moor the henchman ran,
Charged with the signal of his chief's command,
Speed the glad tidings of the wondrous plan
Of free salvation wide o'er all the land,
And speed the glorious cause that nothing shall withstand!

XXVI.

Send forth, O Lord, thy light and truth, O speed
The heavenly message on its blessed way,
And bring the joyful time when none shall need
To his benighted brother's soul to say
"Know thou the Lord?" but when the quickening ray
Of thy pure truth on every soul shall shine,
No more by clouds obscured; and the full day
On every spot shall pour its light divine;
Nor e'er again the Sun of Righteousness decline.

XXVII.

By faithful and devoted priests attended,
In every valley bid thine altars rise,
Where, kindled from the fire from heaven descended,
A pure and acceptable sacrifice
Shall burn, and fragrant incense seek the skies;
While, from the scenes around, each work of thine
Some holy feelings, some pure thought supplies,—
Offerings more meet to lay upon thy shrine
Than treasures of the East, or gold from Chili's mine.

XXVIII.

Thine, O my God, and by thy goodness given
To lead the earth-bound spirit up to thee,
These glorious scenes, where all that's bright in heaven,—
In thine own image bright and fair, we see
As in a mirror. Boundless, pure and free,
The whispering wind, that where it listeth blows
With sweet refreshing power, is felt to be
An image of that Spirit which bestows
Health on the soul diseased, peace on the man of woes

XXIX.

And when thy bright and bounteous sun appears,
And sheds from heaven's serene and cloudless height
Those beams wherewith glad nature's heart he cheers,
Glorious he seems as the great source of light,
But lovelier far appears he in my sight
As the meet emblem of that better Sun,
Whose beams dispel the shades of ancient night,—
Revive the spirit of the contrite one,
And bring immortal joy to all He shines upon.

XXX.

The depth of waters and the strength of hills
Are thine, and thine the forest'^ winding glades.
Each dark and hidden place thy presence fills;
Each height, each vast expanse thy power perva'es:
Softly yet deeply felt, 'mid evening's shades,—
Conspicuous shining in the morning's beams,—
Or when in pensive grey the twilight fades,
Or when a floc l of living glory streams
O'er all the purplea sky, and wide o'er ocean gleams.

XXXI.

When, 'mid the dreamy calr of pensive eve,
They saw each magic hue around them melt,
Well might the musing sons of Greece conceive,
As 'mid some consecrated grove they knelt
By some old altar, that there surely dwelt
A spirit in each hill, and stream and tree:
But all the life, the love, the peace they felt
Around them poured, our eyes unscaled may see
More pure stream descend, O living God, from thee.

XXXII.

And not alone where Nature hath displayed
Her bright enchantments to our wondering eyes,—
Where, in the majesty of might arrayed,
In dark sublimity her hills arise,
An^d floods of glory pour along the skies,—
Not in such scenes her power is felt alone;
Her lowliest look, sw:et soothing thought supplies;
And when she speaks in meekest gentlest tone,
The still, small voice of Heaven our musing hearts may own.

XXXIII.

He who would know what feelings animate
The soul 'mid these wild regions,—who would know
The emotions in the heart these hills create—
He 'mid these scenes sublime himself must go;
For deep and silent oft these raptures flow,
And he who feels them deepest knows the best
How vain the fruitless effort is to throw
Into expression, from the heaving breast,
That which far deeper lies than aught in words expressed.

XXXIV.

Gazing, from some majestic height, afar,
Where hills on hills in endless prospect rise,
Tumultuous oft and wild these feelings are
As the sublime array that meets the eyes,
And boundless as that scene of hills and skies
Yet silent as their deep and solemn hush;
Save that, when prompted by some glad surprise,
From the heart's fulness to the lips they rush,
As, swollen by rains from heaven, thou hears't the torrent's gush.

XXXV.

Dull and insensate were the grovelling soul
That 'mid these mountain scenes could stand, nor feel
Emancipation from the dark control
Of earthly cares and low desires, that steal
The joys of life, and war against the weal
Of the immortal spirit;—to whose sight
These hills, these clouds, these torrents, nought reveal
Of their Creator's glory,—of that might
Which seems to sit enthroned on every cloud-capt height.

XXXVI.

Not to *defend* our liberty alone
Bade He these awe-inspiring mountains rise;
But, mingling with the clouds, He bade them own
Subjection unto nought beneath the skies,
And all the rage of winds and storms despise,
That we in their aspiring heights might see
An image, ever present to our eyes
Of what the Liberty we claim should be,—
Of what *their* freedom is whom God's own Son makes
free.

XXXVII.

Yes! like these mountains should our spirits love
To mingle with the skies, and leave behind
This low, dark scene. In things that are above
Our freed affections their delight should find.
So should each raving storm, each fitful wind,
Sweep harmless by, and spend its rage in vain.
Thus while the bonds of long endearment bind
The heart to earth, yet never should the chain
Of sense or grovelling thought our heavenward flight
restrain.

XXXVIII.

Thrice happy they whose peaceful lot is cast
Amid these tranquil scenes,—far, far away
From all the tumult and the strife that blast
The teeming heart's fresh feelings;—happy they
Who, ne'er allured by the deceitful ray
Of glittering pleasures and unreal joys,
Which lead the crowd from virtue's path astray,
Dwell far from the rude world's distracting noise,
The strife of tongues, and all that the soul's peace
destroys.

XXXIX.

Yes, it is sweet to leave the restless hum
And ferment of the city far behind,
And with unburdened spirit here to come,
And dwell with Nature's children; and to find
That still there are whose uncorrupted mind
Abides unfettered by th' enthralling chain
Whose gilded links the slaves of Mammon bind
Fast to the oar, while every nerve they strain
Toiling to reach a goal which they can never gain.

XL.

Wonder not, then, that Highland hearts should burn
With that serene and quenchless flame of love
To their own mountain homes, which makes them turn
So fondly back to them where'er they rove,—
Which makes the high-peaked hill, the whispering grove,
And all they see, and every sound they hear
In distant lands that has a power to move
Remembrance of these homes to them so dear,—
Which makes the pibroch's sound so pleasing in their ear.

XLI.

And oh! how doubly strengthened are the ties
That bind these absent hearts to youth's abode,
When amid lands of levity arise
The thoughts of that dear land where first they trode,
And, early led upon the heavenward road,
Sweet counsel with their brethren lov'd to take,
And sought in company the house of God.
Oh! sweet to them the faintest sounds that wake
The thoughts of those loved scenes 'twas anguish to forsake.

XLII.

In the soft sighing of the northern gale
The pensive wanderer deems some strain is heard
From Scotia's harp.—With many tender tale
Of bygone times, and well-remembered word
Of whispering love his spirit thus is stirred;
And, while imagination warmer glows,
Till round him seems a stream of music poured,
As irrepressible the rapture grows,
Thus from his inmost soul the joyful feeling flows!

Ye breezes softly swelling
In music on mine ear,
Why bear ye to my dwelling
These notes none else can hear?

Come ye, your glad flight winging,
Here like a faithful dove,
To me some message bringing—
Some words of truth and love,—

Some offering which, while sweeping
O'er Scotia's happy plains,
Was trusted to your keeping,—
Which still your wing retains.

Say, heard ye there the blessing
Wafted for me above,
In words but half expressing
The heart's deep cherished love?

Or come ye hither, knowing
That in this heaving breast
A Scottish heart is glowing,—
The heart ye love the best?

Say, were ye told, ye breezes,
In heaven from whence ye came,
That, sacred still to Jesus,
Here burns one heaven-lit flame?

And is your mission gracious
To this poor heart of mine,
Fresh incense pure and precious,
To place upon its shrine,—

That incense of devotion
Upon my heart to heap,
Which sacred from pollution
Blest Scotia's children keep?

Come, then, and, softly blowing,
These heavenly gifts impart,
Sweet, holy thoughts bestowing
Upon my lonely heart.

As Israel's captive daughters,
That once so sweetly sung,
By Babel's mournful waters,
Their harps on willows hung.

So I, compelled to wander
Far from my happy home,
On it more fondly ponder
As longer here I roam.

And as, in pensive sadness,
I muse on days gone by
I hang the harp of gladness
Beside me with a sigh.

Save when, in expectation
Of meeting yet again,
The bright anticipation
Still wakes a joyful strain.

Even now the voice of greeting
Is swelling on my heart!
For such a joyful meeting,
Oh, who would grudge to part!

XLIII.

How softly, Scotia, falls the Sabbath's calm
O'er thy hushed valleys, and thy listening hills!
And oh! how purifying is the balm
Of that deep peace which then the bosom fills!
The soul that pensive lists thy purling rills
And vocal woodlands, errs it when it deems
That then their voice with holier rapture thrills,
While of the present God all nature seems
Conscious, and her bright face with peaceful gladness beams?

XLIV

How sweet to him that has been doomed to roam
Long 'mid the dwellings of an impious race,
At last returning to his Highland home,
Descends that holy calm! He seeks to trace,
In vain, perhaps, in every aged face
Features familiar to his eyes when young;
For all his friends are gone, and in their place,
These old, unchanging hills and dales among,
By other manners marked, another race has sprung.

XLV.

The kirk itself, still sacred in his eyes,
Is now a ruin, venerably grey,
And in its place he sees another rise.
His own paternal cot is swept away,
And, like his fathers, mingled with the clay.
On all he knew and loved is change impressed;
And what though Art and Enterprise display
Their power and pride where'er his eyes may rest?
Their pomp and vain parade but wound his aged breast.

XLVI.

Perhaps he finds, for wonderful have been
The workings of Improvement's mighty scheme
In later years, the dear though rugged scene,
That wont so lovely in his eyes to seem,
When trod in joyous youth, and oft would [illegible]
Upon his fancies, when from that far land
His soul was wafted homewards in a dream,
Most strangely altered by the busy hand
Of Art, whom Nature's strength and charms in vain
withstand.

XLVII.

Beside his native stream, perhaps, he sees
Some mansion in fantastic pomp arrayed,
Or some huge structure rise, and the few trees,
Alone remaining of the boundless shade
Of the dark woods where oft, of old, he strayed,
He deems,—for they have donned brown Autumn's
dyes,—
Mourn their fallen brothers, clad in leaves decayed.
He seeks their shade to hide from his vexed eyes
The outrages of Art, and thus his thoughts arise.

XLVIII.

"Ye gentle gales that through the branches sigh,
Why grieve ye so, ye wandering breezes? say;
Is it because, when Summer cheered the sky,
Ye wont amid the verdant trees to play
With the fresh leaves throughout the livelong day;
And now, returning to this spot, ye find
Your loved companions rudely torn away
Or withered by some cold and blasting wind
O then, though sad your dirge, 'tis soothing to my mind.

XLIX.

"Sweet to the pensive ear thou mournful blast.
Sweet is thy wailing to the soul that grieves
For joys of bygone days for ever past!
And as thou fondly stirr'st the withered leaves,
The soul that lists thy plaintive voice, and weaves
The while some soft and melancholy lay,
Or mourns departed friends, almost believes
Ye come, with sympathising voice, to say,
'Yours is the common lot, all things of earth decay!'"

F 2

L.

Thus sad he muses o'er the altered face
Of Nature, robbed of half her loveliness;
Mourning the loss of her own simple grace.
And sad, too, are the feelings that impress
His soul amid the bustling liveliness
Of his once quiet village, which now teems
With active sons of commerce; and even less
Amid his native hills at home he seems
Than when in distant lands they rise amid his dreams

LI.

But when the Sabbath's holy silence falls
Upon the vale; and when the church-bell peals
The summons, joyfully obeyed, that calls
Unto the House of Prayer; oh! then he feels
He is indeed at home, and gladness steals
O'er all his heart again. No impious mirth
At eve disturbs the sacred calm that heals
His sinking spirit's sickness from the dearth
Of joys he thought to find around his natal hearth.

LII.

Guard, then, oh Scotia! guard with faithful heart,
And zeal that cannot burn too strong and bright,
This boon of heaven, which makes thee what thou art,
A land of peace and liberty and light.
For wherein lies thy strength but in the might
Of that blest Truth which maketh free indeed?
Oh watch lest Mammon's noxious breath should blight
This sacred tree—this plant of heavenly seed
Whose boughs shall shelter yield, whose fruit thy soul
shall feed.

THE HIGHLANDS.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

AGAIN among tne Highlands! and again [1]
Upon my sight these wondrou. scenes arise,—
The same tnat prompted first my joyful strain,—
The same that first enchained my musing eyes,
And wound around my soul those magic ties
Which never can be broken while the blood
Warms through my conscious frame. Before me lies
The same calm lake o'er whose clear flood
In blissful hours gone by my spirit loved to brood

II.

The hills around me soar as grand as ever,
The trickling rills, in their pure bosom nursed,
As softly flow, till lost in yon bright river
Which winds as tranquilly, through vales that burst
Upon my sight as glorious as when first
They tranced my boyish heart. And, more than all,
In *this* do I rejoice that, sweet as erst
The influence of such scenes was wont to fall,
I feel that influence now as if t ne'er could pall.

III.

Ah! would that it might be for ever thus!
My own bright land, would that the blasts of time
Harmless might sweep alike o'er thee and us;—
And, as they make thy hills still more sublime,
And add new grandeur to thy glorious clime,—
Bidding thy verdant woods more proudly wave,
Would that our hearts, still fresh as in their prime,
The wild and wasting storms of life might brave!
Would that the first warm glow of youth we, too, might
save!

IV.

It may not be;—yet, grateful still to Him
Who bade these scenes arise so lovely here,
Let us rejoice that, though dull age may dim
Our sight to those bright visions that appear
So fair to youth's fond fancy, and may sear
Our early feelings, yet, beyond the tomb,
'Mid scenes more glorious far than e'er may cheer
The heart of mortal—scenes of fadeless bloom,
Our drooping souls shall yet their eagle wings replume.

V.

And even as from yon gnarled and stunted trunk
Sprouts many a tender shoot of lively green,
So, in the soul that in its youth had drunk
The inspiration of each lovely scene
Through which to rove its sweetest joy had been,—
Oft, even in wrinkled age, will spring anew
The feeling pure, the relish fresh and keen,
Of all those scenes wherein its childhood grew,
And where the first deep draughts of quickening thought
it drew.

VI.

There sounds a voice among these hills, whose tones
Wake in the soul an echo—ne'er to die.
There sits a Spirit on these Alpine thrones
That girds himself with might and majesty.
Yea, 'tis the very voice of the Most High
That thunders 'mid these mountains; and is heard
O'er the lone lakes that still and silent lie,
Where serried rocks the wild shores sternly gird,
And ne'er by human voice the slumbering air is stirred

VII.

O, it is joy to boyhood's bounding heart
To roam unfettered far o'er hill and dale,—
To breast the steep, or down its face to dart,
And, on the precipice's verge, to quail
With pleasing dread,—far down the rugged vale
Gazing to where the river foams beneath;
And, roving free, 'tis pleasure to inhale
Health in the untainted air of every breath,
And reckless on to plunge amid the fragrant heath.

VIII.

But there is far a loftier joy than this,
That yields a still more rapturous delight,
It is the calm, the almost heavenly bliss,
Gazing afar from some majestic height
Where burst all Nature's glories on the sight,
To feel the soul on Contemplation's wings
Soar, like the eagle in its heavenward flight,
Till almost it beholds the King of kings,
And listens to the song the choir seraphic sings.

IX.

Thus have I felt when, 'mid these scenes of peace,
Far from the busy hum of man's abode,
Rejoicing from the world to feel release,
Some giant hill's commanding height I trod:
For then my soul, freed from the cumbrous load
Of vexing thoughts and earth-born passions, soared
On wings of sacred rapture up to God;
And, like the lark, in joyful songs adored
With Nature all around, Creation's glorious Lord.

X.

And, as itself is left awhile behind
The ills that are the lot of all below,
Hidden, awhile, and banished from my mind
Were all those wide o'erwhelming floods of woe
That o'er man's life from Sin's deep fountain flow.
The stern realities of woe and vice
Vanished before my soul's delighful glow,
As at the touch of Spring the Winter's ice;
And in my dreams all Earth appeared a Paradise.

XI.

Nor there intruded aught upon my sight
To bid these sweet and fond illusions fade—
To bring my soul down from its joyous flight;
F r, far and wide, in all my eyes surveyed,
In sky and hill, in stream and plain and glade,
Was nought but harmony and beauty found;
And I exclaimed, "O God, if thou hast made
For man such scenes—with such pure beauty crowned,
What shall those regions be where endless joys abound?"

XII.

For ever, lovely Lake, could I, untired,
Gaze on thy tranquil features, while my mind,
With thoughts accordant with the scene inspired,
In all thy sweet and eloquent looks might find
Expression ever changing—for the wind,
Even as a ministering spirit given
For souls to Nature's teaching thus resigned,
Varies the aspect of the o'ershadowing heaven,
By clouds now parting wide, now in thick masses driven.

XIII.

Now sweetly dost thou smile, while in the rays
Of the bright opening heaven thy bosom glows;
And o'er thy face a gleam of gladness plays,
Not like the mirth the vacant spirit knows,
But like that placid cheerfulness which flows
From a pure heart, that thinks and fears no ill.—
But darker now the sky above thee grows,
A pensive shade comes o'er thee, calm and still,
As of a patient heart resigned to heaven's high will.

XIV.

But on thy banks I may no longer dwell.[2]
Northward I turn where frowns the dark Ben Mhore,
And rest me by Saint Fillan's holy well,
And that still lake,* from whose fair bosom pour
The rolling floods † that dash with furious roar
O'er shelving rocks, till now more calmly sweeps
The deepening stream, and leads me to the shore
Of bright Loch Tay, where glorious Fingal sleeps, ‡
And where the blackening pine o'er many a warrior
weeps.

* Loch Dochart. † The River Dochart ‡ At Killin.

XV.

The gentle lake expands its tranquil breast,[3]
And heaven and earth in its fair bosom find
Their hues and forms reflected.—Surely blest
The soul, to all its outward lot resigned,
By nothing ruffled, yet to nothing blind,
Which, like these placid waters, can impart
To scenes and forms thus imaged in the mind
Its own mild lustre, and by this sweet art
Feels that all things are pure unto the pure in heart.

XVI.

And pure in heart, if ever heart was pure
In this dark scene, so full of sin and woe,
Was she who, from a world that sought to lure
Her young affections in their first warm glow,
And heaped upon her all it could bestow.
Upon its idols, to these shades withdrew,
And here first knew the peace and joy that flow
From the Lamb's sprinkled flood, and oft anew,
Here felt her soul reviv'd by heaven's refreshing dew.

XVII.

Oh long of those proud days these hills may boast,
When regal splendour threw its dazzling sheen
O'er lawn and lake; and when the gathering host
Of Highland chivalry here hailed their queen;
But sweeter 'tis to think in this calm scene
Of her whose heart from this world's pomp and pride,
The crown that fadeth not had power to wean,
And here still rules, with heart to hers allied,
One who can dare to stem the age's downward tide.

XVIII.

By these green banks through wood and tangled brake,
What bliss to rove one long bright summer's day,
Where through the glistening leaves bright gleams
the Lake,
And soar the azure mountains far away;—
Up this deep glen o'er winding paths to stray,
Where leaps the torrent* to the abyss below;—
To glide with thy calm waters, glorious Tay,
Where, as from forth their parent Lake they flow,
On them the arching boughs their green reflection throw!

XIX.

O'er all thy banks such lovely verdure blooms—
So rich in its luxuriance, that it seems
As if the heavenly radiance, that illumes
Thy placid face with bright and joyous beams,
Shed upon all around th' enlivening gleams
Of a pure, peaceful gladness, which bestows
Such healthful freshness as the living streams,
Gladd'ning the Heavenly City, give to those
Whose souls receive the light o'er their calm wave that
glows.

XX.

Well do I love thy music;—yet, awhile,[4]
From where thy rolling waters gently glide,
'Mid fields that still return their cheerful smile,
To yon green dell now let me turn aside,
Where foaming torrents† the dark cliffs divide,
While trees gaze trembling on their wild career
Spirit of Burns! My wandering footsteps guide,
And chant thy lays of love upon mine ear,
Harmonious with the strain that Nature raiseth here.

* Falls of Acharn. † Falls of Moness, Aberfeldy.

XXI.

For still, ye twining birks, of constant love
Ye seem to speak, in descant wildly sweet,
Where, from each other severed, yet above
From either side your mingling branches meet,
While, in the dark cold depths beneath your feet,
The angry river, where it rolls unseen,
Strives, like some artful foe, with foul deceit,
Still more to deepen the great gulph between;
But, blest with mutual trust, ye still can smile serene.

XXII.

Full long, delighted, might I linger here,
And calmly muse, on mossy banks reclining,
While falls this lulling sound upon mine ear
From yon bright stream in the stray sun-beams
shining,
Where thus the gentle trees are round it twining.
But yet with thee, sweet Tay, can I pursue
My onward path again, without repining,
For lovely are the scenes thou lead'st me through,[5]
Till burst thy circling hills, Dunkeld, upon my view.

XXIII.

And oh! to stand 'mid such a scene as this,
Where, in one glorious theatre combined,—
As if uniting all the streams of bliss
To pour them on the heart and fill the mind
With holiest thoughts and images,—we find
All that can charm the soul by sound or sight,
The voice of birds, the fragrant-breathing wind,
The sun that pours o'er all his joyful light,
The deep luxuriant woods that clothe each towering
height,

XXIV.

The river from the wood's dark bosom swelling,
So deeply tinged with the surrounding green
Its full flood there from Earth's deep womb seems
welling,
And fitly harmonising with a scene
So hushed in blissful peace, and so serene,
The old Cathedral's venerable pile,
Which leads our thoughts o'er years that intervene
Since the bless'd heralds from Iona's Isle
Bade the pure light of truth o'er these bright regions
smile,—

XXV.

Oh! this is joy!—and yet to these farewell! [6]
But no farewell to grove and towering hill,
Dark cliff, and deep ravine, and woody dell,
Deep rolling stream, bright lake and whitening rill;
All these, in wild and varied grandeur, still
Compass my path around and glad mine eye,
Sending through all my frame a joyous thrill;
For passing few the scenes be that may vie,
Dark Tummil, with thy shores which now I wander by.

XXVI.

Here, thundering o'er the rocks with furious leap,
Thy foaming torrent rushes down amain;
Then, 'neath yon arching cliffs, serene and deep.
Thy waters seek repose—as if they fain
Would rest in that retreat. But thence, again,
Too soon recalled, down pours thy tortured wave.
So sought the persecuted tribe in vain
A refuge from their foes in yon dark cave—
Wild vengeance dragged them forth, and made these
floods their grave.

XXVII.

But now, where, mingling his dark flood with thine,[7]
Th' impetuous Garry's brawling waters sweep,
'Mid shadowing woods of oak and feathery pine
Let me return to stray ;—and let me keep
My onward path where drooping birches weep
O'er his wild current, murmuring far below.
Where trees innumerous crown the verdant steep.
While, all around, the rugged mountains throw
Their shadows, and o'er all, high towers dark Ben-y-Gloe.

XXVIII.

Far different did the rugged scene appear
When, marshalled o'er these hills in stern array,
Of old the warring bands encountered here,
And fell the "Bold Dundee" amid the fray,
Victorious ;—expiating, as they say,
By this so glorious death, the deeds that stained
His past career.—Ah! not thus washed away
Could be the gore upon those hands engrained
Whereby the noblest blood of Scotia's sons was drained.

XXIX.

Dark o'er the hills the billowy vapour rolls,[8]
Obscuring every proud, aspiring height.
Thus oft it is, methinks, with towering souls.
Th' imposing grandeur of whose vaunted might
Is but of earth, and from whose earth-bound sight
Is hid that region far beyond, which beams
With everlasting and unfading light.
That region where they dwell,—to them which seems
A very heaven—but proves a place of clouds and dreams.

XXX.

But to the lowly spirit is revealed
That loftier height, which, though by darkening woes
And earth-sprung cares it be at times concealed,
Yet with its own eternal lustre glows,
And while to him such light is left as shows
The path of present duty, 'twill suffice
For peace and comfort, while he feels and knows
That soon all clouds must part, and purer skies,
Bright with unfading light, will cheer his raptured eyes.

XXXI.

Amid the shifting clouds peep dimly out
Grey rock, and whitening stream, and mountain peak;
And the hoarse torrent's roar is like the shout
Of those who, wandering 'mid the mountains, seek
Their devious path, and to each other speak
In these loud signals, lest th' impervious cloud
Should part them from their guide;—or like the shriek
Of some great mountain bird;—and now more loud
Swells the wild din, and seems like shoutings of the crowd.

XXXII.

Yet while with musing eye around I gaze,
Methinks I find fair tokens, dimly seen
Beneath the veil of this obscuring haze,
Of what the beauty of this glen had been
'Neath brighter skies,—the deep, luxuriant green
Of the dark woods,—the river's placid sweep,—
The tufted shrubs that half reveal, half screen
The towering rocks,—the vistas dark and deep
Where o'er the murmuring stream the birch and willow weep.

XXXIII.

Yes, through such glorious regions while we stray,
Though clouds or twilight shades obscure the scene,
Still, from the fading light of parting day,
Or some faint glimpse, obscurely caught between
The veiling clouds, the soul whose joy hath been
Amid such scenes to stray till it hath grown
Familiar with the bright and the serene,
The glorious and the grand, may feel and own
A kindred grandeur here, howe'er obscurely shown.

XXXIV.

And it is even thus that he whose mind,
With love and fervent charity imbued,
Hath ever sought in all around to find,
And find alone, the beauteous and the good,
Even where the mist of error still may brood,
Or ignorance or prejudice deface,
Still in such souls, with patient candour viewed,
From some faint glimpse, some transient gleam, may trace
Fair charms by Nature given, or lovelier gifts of grace.

XXXV.

But now the raging of the storm is o'er:
Reigns o'er the hills a universal hush;
And all is calm, save the wild torrent's roar,
Whose dark, swollen waters more impetuous rush
Adown their rugged course, and sweep and crush
The straggling shrubs upon their sides that grow;
Like Grief's first unrestrained and blinded gush,
When just recovered from the stunning blow,
Enough to see and feel the vastness of its woe.

XXXVI.

And now the hovering clouds have rolled away,
Like the vain terrors of illusive dreams;
The sun again sheds down a peaceful ray:
Bright 'neath the opening sky the river gleams;
Glistens with joy fair Nature's face, and seems
More lovely than before: even the bare rock,
Glittering and glad reflects these joyous beams;
As if it sought the tempest's wrath to mock,
Smiling, to show how vain and impotent the shock.

XXXVII.

So when aside the clouds of darkness roll,
And beams of heavenly love and mercy pour
Upon the afflicted yet believing soul,—
Adversity's rude shock it can no more,
As those to whom no hope is left, deplore.
Cheered by those sweet, reviving rays, it feels
A gladness that it never knew before;
More than the joy of grief upon it steals—
It is that joy which Heaven to humble Faith reveals.

XXXVIII.

Yet, when the floods of grief themselves are dried,
Nor heard in gentlest murmurs to complain,
And seem within the bosom to have died,—
Even then, deep furrows in the heart remain,
Which, spite of time, their ancient place maintain;
And, in the hour of gloom, when other woes
Descend upon the heart—oh then again
In the same tract a kindred sorrow flows,
Waking sad thoughts which deep within the soul repose.

XXXIX.

While thus I muse where the wild Bruar rolls, [9]
Gazing across the northward moors, the thought
Of dark Loch Garry with its verdant knolls,
Of her who there her fairy lover sought,
Where by his magic aid her task she wrought,—
Of drear Loch Ericht's awful solitude,
And lonely Laggan, to my soul is brought:
And I remember how, entranced, I stood
Where Rothiemurchus spreads his wide and bristling wood.

XL.

Without an end prolonged must be the strain [10]
Would tell of all the bliss my bosom owes
To these wild scenes, and still would there remain
A nameless feeling that no utterance knows.
But now, since soon my pilgrimage must close,
To loved Strathairdle let me take my way,
And from my lonely wanderings find repose
In commune with kind hearts; or, musing, stray
Where proud, o'erhanging woods Kindrogan's cliffs array.

XLI.

Or, on this rock lone resting, let me swell
The dashing stream's wild music, and the song
Of woodland choristers, amid the "Dell*
Of Birds;" and while upon my spirit throng
The thoughts of other days, let me prolong
These peaceful meditations till the shades
Of evening gather round me, for more strong
The influence grows that this sweet scene pervades
As from the soft, blue sky day's garish radiance fades.

* In Gaelic "Dirnanean," the name of the seat of Patrick Small, Esq

XLII.

Yes, by this rushing torrent let me sit,
Whose brawling din chimes aptly with my strain,
Which now must be of battles; for, as flit
The visions through my mind, I see again
This wild glen ravaged by the roving Dane;—
I see him flee before the dauntless Gael,
And mark the spot where the proud chief was slain:
The giant Aiulle, with his rustling mail,
Lies here—and many an ell of grave attests the tale.

XLIII.

Wandering, oh Scotia, thy wild scenes among,
Listing the torrents that impetuous roll
Adown thy hills their roaring streams along,
Dread feelings oft have swelled upon my soul,
As thoughts of those past times upon me stole,
When the fierce storms of discord round thee roared,
By lawless passions urged to spurn control;
From every hill when feud's red torrents poured,
Swelled as they rolled along by many a Highland horde.

XLIV.

Resistless down the vale the wild stream rushed,
And every gentle flower of peace that grew
Upon its banks was by its fury crushed;
And ah! these lovely flowers were then but few,
And slow, when thus destroyed, to spring anew,
To them so uncongenial was the time—
So rude the blasts of violence that blew.
Beauty was almost banished from the clime,
And left the scenes of life most ruggedly sublime.

XLV.

And such, oh Scotia! was the wintry age
When thou wast sunk in Superstition's gloom,
The scene of stormy wars and feudal rage,
'Till the dark clouds that oft o'erhung thy doom
Were scattered by those rays which now illume
Thy plains;—till rays of heavenly truth were shed
Unclouded o'er thee—calling forth the bloom
And balmy air of spring—to cheer, and spread
Thy vales with loveliest flowers which there had long
lain dead.

XLVI.

With these I gladly would adorn my song;—
Long of thy peaceful virtues might I sing;
But ah! already have I sung too long,
And I must cease;—though ever, as I fling
My hand upon some sweetly sounding string
To which my heart responding sends a thrill
Through all my frame,—from joy's exhaustless spring
Another strain—another rapture still
Flows forth, till song and joy my breast—my being fill.

XLVII.

Yet must I cease:—a thousand thoughts o'erflowing
The fountains of my soul I must restrain;
A thousand feelings in my bosom glowing
Must burn and plead for utterance in vain;
This harp in silence now must rest again,
And speak no more of Scotia's joy or woe,
Nor sing her praise; yet let me not complain
While in my breast these lively feelings glow,—
While through my soul, unheard, these streams of
music flow.

NOTES

TO

THE HIGHLANDS.

, The figures refer to the corresponding figures in the text.

CANTO I.

[1] THE nature of poetry, and the design of the preceding poem having precluded the introduction of many of those details and observations which might be interesting to readers in general, and especially to those who, either in person or in imagination, may wish to traverse the scenes of which the Author has endeavoured to give rather his own impressions than a minute description, it is proposed to supplement, as concisely as possible, the musings which he has attempted to express in verse, by the matters of fact which are more proper to prose. We shall suppose, therefore, the reader to have the poem in his hand, while we conduct him step by step along the path which it more vaguely indicates.

On the ancient history of Caledonia—the character and customs of its warlike and primitive inhabitants—the origin of their superstitions, the circumstances which cherished that proud spirit of independence which neither the arts nor the arms of the world's conquerors could subdue, we cannot here enlarge, interesting though the subject be. Such as may wish to follow out these topics, may find them discussed by many a

learned pen, and by none more pleasingly than that of Mrs. Grant of Laggan. But our present object is simply to point out the localities which, from their own inherent peculiarities, or the associations connected with them, are most fitted to arrest the attention as we pass through that land which is "the haunt and the main region of our song." Nevertheless we are naturally drawn to make our first excursion in the direction of those regions which are most closely linked with the memories of those "days of other years" when in the grey cloud of the evening that flitted along the mountain side, the imagination of the lone watcher, or the bereaved mourner, was wont to behold the spirits of the departed;—when the warrior, as he rested after a day of strife, with the trophies of his victory strewn around him, listened to the song of the aged bard, or indulged the fancy which shaped the rack that careered across the storm-swept heavens or the cloud that sent forth its fiery flash and wrathful sound into the forms of battling gods and the rattling cars of aërial combatants.* From those cloudy heights of speculation and shadowy reminiscence to which the wings of the muse had borne us, and whence awhile we looked down through the misty veil of antiquity on the scenes of our future wanderings, we, in the poem, light down among the hills and rustling woods of Morven, and wander among the haunts of the dauntless Fingalians, and drink in the spirit of old romance at the birthplace of Ossian among the dark recesses of Glencoe, ere we launch forth from the sounding shore to seek that green island of the deep from which a *better* spirit was diffused over these rugged regions, and whence a light shone forth which banished the airy terrors of ancient superstition. But our readers perhaps would protest against a similar method of flight into the heart of the Highlands in this prose accompaniment, as contrary to the promise we have just made of marking out on the surface of this terraqueous globe the path along which they may follow us in our dreamy wanderings. Let none, then, lag behind for lack of power to ride with us on the *clouds*;—they, too, may

overtake us by the aid of *vapour* in another shape,—that namely, in which it is tamed and subdued by man, and yoked to the car with which he ploughs the deep. To speak in language free of all misty obscurity, and come fairly and once for all to the earth, you will find at the Broomielaw of the busy city of Glasgow, a steamer which will convey you down the Clyde and through the Kyles of Bute, and thence, if you choose, up Loch Fyne to Inverary, from which you may proceed by Port Sonachan across Loch Awe, and past the base of the majestic Ben Cruachan to Dunstaffnage, whose ancient castle was once the seat of Scottish royalty, and where you are in the midst of the scenes which the bard of Cona has peopled with the shades of ancient warriors and love-stricken maids. Reaching the western shore, you see Dunolly Castle surmounting the beetling crags that gird the coast, and at Oban you halt for a while till the vessel is ready to bear us together to Iona. You may, however, reach this point in a more direct and expeditious way by leaving the steamer at Loch Gilphead, on the shore of Loch Fyne, and proceeding by the Crinan canal to Loch Crinan, and past the point of Cragnish, around which the scenery presents an imposing appearance of rugged grandeur. If, while you have been thus winding your way to Oban, we, having outstripped you in our aërial flight, have been wandering and musing among the wilds of Morven, and the haunted caves and crags of Glencoe, you need not envy us our lone and visionary rambles in that direction, for we promise to conduct you back again ere long to these dread scenes, and to tell you a tale about them of darker terror than any of Ossian's.

[2] Meanwhile we embark at Oban amid the grey obscurity of the silent dawn which comports well with the thoughts of those early times about which our minds are occupied while, we sweep round the dark coast of Mull, till we come in sight of the sacred island of Iona, over which the Sun of Righteousness first rose on the horizon of our land, scattering the

Heathen darkness that brooded over it. It was in the year 565 that Columba, with his companions, having left the coast of Ireland in a boat composed chiefly of wicker-work, found themselves early one morning within view of the "Island of the Waves." Having landed there, they established a religious institution, which, though it has been designated a monastery, was, in many respects, very unlike the monastic institutions of the Popedom, to which the Culdees owned no allegiance, and which they strenuously opposed on those points which are most prominent in the Popish system—namely, auricular confession, penance, and authoritative absolution, transubstantiation, the worship of saints, and particularly of the Virgin Mary, dependance on human merits, and works of supererogation, praying for the dead, and even, as has been shown by Dr. Jamieson and others, on the subject of Episcopacy,—their Abbot not being of a different order from the rest, but merely "*primus inter pares*"— a kind of perpetual moderator of their presbytery. Not only was Scotland indebted to them for the knowledge of Christianity, but many parts of England, where a more doubtful light had been shed by other teachers from the south, hailed with gladness the arrival of instructors from Iona, who "expounded unto them the way of God more perfectly."

3 The ruins at present visible on the island are not those of the buildings erected by Columba, but of edifices raised at different periods during subsequent, though still early ages. The oldest of these is probably the chapel dedicated to St. Oran, the associate of Columba, and which was attached to a convent of the order of St. Augustine. A tomb is still pointed out as that of St. Oran, and several kings of Scotland, Ireland, and Norway, with one of France, are said to repose in the enclosure called Reilig Ouran. Northward of this chapel are the remains of a causeway leading to the cathedral, and called the Main Street, which is joined by one named the Royal Street, and by Martyr Street which leads to the bay of the

same name, where the bodies of kings and nobles were landed for interment. On the west side of the latter street stands McLean's cross, one of three hundred votive crosses which were demolished by the order of the Synod of Argyll, in 1580.

4 Our meditations among these relics of antiquity are interrupted by the intimation that the vessel is ready to sail; and, embarking again, we are borne westward toward Staffa, whose dark bulk seems to grow as we advance, but gives promise of nothing very remarkable till we draw near and observe the extraordinary structure of the whole of its eastern side, which presents a magnificent range of basaltic columns, interspersed with deep, retiring caves, of which the most noted and most wonderful is the Musical or Fingal's Cave. Approaching, by a boat, the splendid entrance of this natural cathedral, we land beneath a Gothic arch, sixty-six feet in height, upon the broken columns which afford a passage into the deep and lofty interior, where on either hand the colossal range of hexagonal and pentagonal pillars stretches far into the gloom of the mysterious penetralia. The watery floor, if the weather is calm, seems to be of pure green crystal, reflecting the dark shafts of the vast colonnade; and the fretted ceiling which is stretched above is formed, like the columns, of angular blocks, the interstices of which are filled with a beautiful calcareous stalagmite. If the sea should be agitated, the solemn sound of the waves as they roll into the echoing recesses of the cave, produces a most imposing effect, which will not be marred if chimed in with by the human voice in an appropriate chant, to which the long-drawn aisle will impart a peculiar depth and solemnity of tone. Besides Fingal's Cave, there are three others. First, the Clamshell Cave, on one side of which the columns present a peculiar appearance, being carved like the ribs of a ship; while on the other side, the projecting ends of a horizontal range form a surface resembling a honey-comb. Second, the Boat Cave, between which and the Musical Cave

the basaltic rocks rise to the greatest elevation; the summit being about one hundred and twelve feet above high water mark. The size of this cave is not great, and the columns around its entrance are more worthy of attention than the interior, which presents only the smooth rock. Third, Mc Kinnon's or the Cormorant's Cave, which recedes to the extent of 224 feet, but of which the sides are also smooth. In addition to these caves, a remarkable islet, called Bouchaile, or the Herdsman, is deserving of attention. It is composed of small symmetrical columns, somewhat inclined inward so as to present a conical appearance.

5 Leaving Staffa, we land at Tobermory on the coast of Mull; and after passing the night there, we proceed up Loch Sunart the romantic scene of Professor Wilson's beautifu poem "Unimore." Steering among verdant islands, with the hills of Ardnamurchan on one side, and those of Morven on the other, we proceed to Strontian, at the head of the Loch, —a place interesting to the chemist on account of the remarkable spar which bears its name. From this point, a road may be found to Coran Ferry, from which the traveller may proceed to Glencoe, or may take the steamer up the Caledonian canal. But for the present we prefer the road which leads from Salin, on the banks of Loch Sunart, to Kinloch Moidart. This place is interesting on account of the associations which connect it with the landing of Charles Edward; and the thoroughly Highland character of the scenery around accords well with the events which it recalls. Hither, the Prince repaired after landing at Borradale, a little further north on the coast; and a narrow avenue, still called the Prince's Walk, is pointed out as the place where he held council with the friendly chiefs who joined him here. From Kinloch Moidart, he went, on the 8th of August, 1745, by water to Glenalladale, on the side of Loch Shiel, and next morning proceeded to Glenfinnan at the head of the Loch. In speak-

ing of that and other places we shall have occasion to trace his subsequent fortunes.

CANTO II.

1 The coast of Moidart is wild, rugged, and irregular in the highest degree; yet are there many spots of verdant beauty to be found among the dells and inlets that run up among the hills; and the gladdening influence of a bright summer's day, succeeding to a threatening morning, banishes all gloom, and disposes us to cheerful reflection, as we slowly wander along the indented shore, or wind our way among the intersecting glens, catching at intervals a view of the sea with its scattered islands. In the poem, expression is given to some of these musings; and allusion is made to a phenomenon, which, though of constant occurrence in tropical climates, is only to be observed in ours on a day of unusual heat, but which may be seen exemplified by the tremulous and undulating appearance of the air which surrounds any heated body. It would "undoubtedly" be more correct to speak of the undulating appearance of the objects seen through the atmosphere thus affected as a refracting medium; but the impression on the mind of the spectator is, that the air itself has become visible, and "to muse on Nature with a poet's eye," does not mean to regard it with the optics of a philosopher.

2 Proceeding northward from Kinloch Moidart, and crossing Loch Aylort, we pass onward by Borradale to Arisaig. It is evening when we arrive here; but wishing to reach Skye without delay, we are glad to find a boat ready to convey us thither, across the moonlit sea. This mode of conveyance, however, will probably be thought by most travellers rather a

primitive one in these days of steam navigation, and for the accommodation of such persons, a steam-boat touches on certain days of the week at Arisaig, by which they may reach any part of the coast of Skye from Armidale to Broadford Having reached the former point, where the elegant modern mansion of Lord Macdonald stands amidst woods of oak and birch, we proceed onward, passing the ivied ruins of the castle of Knock, and keeping the coast road for three miles further, till we reach Isle Oransay. Here we strike across a moorland country, and at the distance of nine miles arrive at Broadford. Thence we proceed through Strath, and, passing the marble quarries, reach Kilbride. Having launched forth on Loch Slapin, we sail round the iron-bound coast, in one of whose many caves Charles Edward once found refuge.

3 Doubling the headland at Aird, we find Loch Scavaig stretched before us; and as we advance further into the bay, we become more and more impressed with the stern and awful grandeur of the stupendous mountains which shoot their abrupt and iron-like cliffs far into the sky, and cast down a dim twilight over the scattered rocks and the heaving waves, whose restless moan adds to the gloom and loneliness of the scene. As we advance further into the depths of this wonderful region, and clamber over the rough, shelving rocks, we find a cascade dashing over a broad ledge, and pouring its waters into the sea. Pressing yet further on, the still, dark lake of Coruisk, studded with four green islands, and girt with a belt of stunted sward, presents itself. All around, the bare black cliffs arise, shooting almost perpendicularly into the heavens, and barring all egress, save on the side from which we have approached.

4 Retracing our steps, we may either take the boat again to Strathaird's cave, which we passed in coming to Scavaig, or we may cross over the hills, and thus reach it more speedily.

Having furnished ourselves with a good collection of candles, we approach, with some difficulty, the rugged and wave-worn entrance of this wonderful grotto. Passing through a deep cleft in the lofty rocks, through which the waves often dash with great violence, we succeed in reaching the inner chamber, which must be entered by a steep ascent, over what seems a huge block of white marble, from the summit of which we look upon the wonders of the cave. These have been much defaced by the wantonness of tourists, who have not scrupled to break down the carved work of this natural temple; but there remains much of the more massy portions of the architecture, displaying the most striking resemblance to Gothic arches, pillars, and mouldings, of pure white marble. At the further extremity is a well of beautiful clear water, beyond which the spar forms an elegant arch in which the wonders of the cave terminate.

6 Emerging again to the upper regions, we take the liberty of introducing our readers to our hospitable friends, whose abode is on the coast immediately above the cave. The night is setting in, and the storm is beginning to rage around, a fitting accompaniment to those tales of *glamoury* to which we are privileged to listen. Nowhere have the superstitions of the Highlands found a more congenial soil than in Skye; nor have they, even yet, been entirely rooted out. The spirits that have fled from the more open and more frequented vales and straths of the main-land, have found a refuge among its rocky fastnesses, and flit occasionally across its lonely heaths; and the "Seer of Skye" has cast a shred of his mantle on many an aged shoulder, giving a mysterious power of supernatural discernment, when "coming events cast their shadows before" In the text, a brief allusion is made to two out of the many marvellous narratives which may be picked up of an evening around the crackling *ingle*. The first relates to a shepherd, who, it is said, came home one night with his clothes all

torn, in the encounter, as he verily believed, with some of the infernal powers, who had first breathed around him a cold blast, then attacked him from behind in the form of a grey-hound, which suddenly changed into that of a woman bearing a strange resemblance to "the lass he lo'ed the best." A key to this event might, perhaps, be found in the jealousy of a competitor for the favour of the said maiden, whom this shepherd was wont to visit without his master's leave in the evenings. Perhaps the rival had taken this way of frightening him out of his visits, which he effectually accomplished. This and other stories, however, had given such an evil fame to the neighbourhood, that the master has sometimes found it difficult to get servants to engage with him, and many of those who are with him scruple to venture out at night alone. The second story referred to is related thus. A fishing boat was moored on the coast of Rum during the night, and the men agreed to watch it by turns, in case it should be dashed on the rocks. One of them, on returning to a house on the shore, after taking his turn, fainted; and when his time came again, positively refused to go. Next morning, when they were going to set sail for Tobermory, he as peremptorily refused to embark with them, "although he should have all Tobermory to himself for going," or though they should put him in gaol for not fulfilling his engagement. Accordingly they told him they would hire another man at his expense to do his work, which they did. When pressed to say what made him so determined, he said that he had seen a coffin placed across the barrels in the boat. The men performed their voyage to Tobermory and back in safety; but on their return they found that an old woman of their acquaintance had died, and, not having yet heard the reason of their companion's refusal to go with them, they prepared her coffin on the top of these barrels.

6 Bidding farewell to his friends at the cave, the minstrel also takes leave of Skye. He would not do so, however with-

out recommending those whose time permits of it, to visit Glen Sligithan, which, in wild grandeur, rivals Glencoe, and which may be reached by a somewhat rugged road leading from Camusunery, a farm in the neighbourhood of Scavaig, from which to the further extremity of the glen the distance is about eight miles. The ancient castle of Dunvegan in the north west of the island is also an object of attraction; and, near the most northerly point, an extraordinary hill named Quiraing, is well worthy of attention. The hill rises to the height of a thousand feet, and on the north-east presents a precipitous basaltic front. At the summit there is a deep hollow, the bottom of which is a level oblong green platform. All around the rocks rise in detached columns, between which a view is obtained of the surrounding country. The whole appearance indicates it to be the crater of an extinct volcano. Many parts of Skye have also been rendered interesting by their association with the romantic adventures of Charles Edward. Having fled from Culloden, he embarked at Borradale, where he had first landed, and escaped to the Island of Benbecula, from whence he proceeded to the Long Island. After remaining there for some weeks, he was joined by Flora Mc Donald, who had been induced to undertake the bold enterprise of conducting him through the toils of his pursuers to a place of safety. With her he embarked, disguised as her Irish female attendant; and, landing at Trotternish, in Skye, he was conducted to Kingsburgh, near Snizort, by Mr. Mc Donald, the proprietor of that estate. He there assumed a Highland dress, and proceeded to Portree, from which he was conducted by Captain Mc Leod, and two sons of Mc Leod, of Raasay, first to the Island of Raasay, and afterwards to Scorriebreck in Trotternish. Thence with Captain Mc Leod he went to Strath, from which, under the conduct of the old Laird of Mc Kinnon, and Mc Kinnon, of Ellighuil, he escaped through the midst of watchful enemies to the head of Loch Hourn in the opposite main-land. He then proceeded to Glen Morriston, and spent three weeks in a cave among the moun-

tains between that glen and Strathglass, guarded by seven freebooters, who refused to take advantage of the high price set on his head. Leaving this retreat, he lay concealed for awhile among the mountains around Loch Arkaig and Loch Lochy. He then joined Lochiel and Cluny at Lochaber, and remained with them for about three weeks in a cave, aptly denominated the *cage*, high up in a precipice of the rocky Benalder, in the lonely vicinity of Loch Ericht. Here he received intelligence that two French vessels were waiting to receive him at Loch na Nuagh; and proceeding once more to Borradale, he embarked in safety for France, after taking a sorrowful farewell of his country and his friends.

7 Having given these notices to those who may be inclined to linger a little longer in Skye, for the sake of its natural wonders, or its historic associations, we retrace our steps again to Broadford, and proceed thence eastward by the road which winds through the hills to Kyle Rhea. Here we find a ferry across to Glenelg, in the neighbourhood of which the most interesting objects are three Danish towers or *dunes*—among the most entire in the Highlands—which are situated about three miles and a half from Bernera, in a beautiful vale called Glen Beg. Having visited these, we proceed by the road which leads eastward over Maam Ratachan, and at the distance of eleven miles and a half, we reach Shielhouse on the banks of the beautiful Loch Duich.

8 About eight miles from Shielhouse is the fall of Glomach, the highest in the Highlands. The path which leads to it runs up among the hills from the Bridge of Linassie, which crosses the water of Crowe at the head of Little Loch Duich. From many points among the hills through which we are led, a view may be obtained of the abrupt and serrated mountains of the surrounding country with the lochs that run in among them. At length we reach the water of the Glomach at a point above the fall. Here we find the stream plunging over the black

cliffs, into a ravine whose depth from the top of the surrounding rocks is not less than seven or eight hundred feet. The height of the fall itself is three hundred and fifty feet. The whole extent, however, cannot be seen from above; but from a projecting rock at some distance down the ravine, and to which a descent may be effected, a more complete view may be obtained.

9 From Shielhouse a road proceeds toward the east, of which the different branches lead to Glengarry, to Fort Augustus, and to Glenmoriston. Wishing, however, to penetrate farther into the wild scenery which lies towards the north, we proceed to Dornie, near which stands Ellandonnan Castle, an ancient fortress built by Alexander II. Crossing a ferry here, we advance northward to another at Lochcarron, and thus arrive at Jeantown. Holding on our course among the stupendous hills of Applecross, we reach Shieldaig on the banks of Loch Torridon, around which the scenery is characterised by the most awful and rugged grandeur. Thence we take a boat to Torridon House at the head of the loch, or find our way thither on foot by a rough and winding path. Here we find a road which leads to Kinloch Ewe at the head of Loch Maree.

10 This lake yields to none in Scotland in respect of stern and gloomy magnificence. Along its northern side a range of bold and rocky mountains rises abruptly from the water's edge. The southern bank presents a more varied appearance, the hills receding further back, and leaving a space which is occupied with every variety of woody knoll, brown heath, and copse-covered eminence. The lake is about eighteen miles long, and from one to two broad. Its surface is diversified by a number of beautiful islands, of which the most remarkable is that which is called Eilan Maree; its name, as well as that of the lake, being, it is said, derived from St. Maree, a Culdee from Iona, or Applecross, who fixed his residence here.

11 In this island there is a well whose waters were long supposed to be a sovereign specific for insanity. Here, also, is a burial-place, which is said to contain the bones of a king of Norway, and a daughter of a king of Ireland. The tradition concerning them is alluded to in the poem, but may be more fully related here. They were engaged to be married, and the ceremony was to be performed by the holy man who resided on this island, where it was fixed that they should meet. The Prince of Norway arrived first at the island; and impatient of his bride's delay, he sent messengers to Poolewe, where he had heard that a ship had arrived, with instructions to make inquiries, and to intimate the result by displaying a white flag as they returned up the lake, if their tidings were good, and a black one if the contrary should be the case. Finding, when they reached Poolewe, that the Princess had arrived, they proceeded to conduct her to the island, but in sailing with her up the lake, they, by way of putting their master's love to the test, hoisted the black flag at their mast-head. On seeing this the prince, it is said, either died of grief, or put a period to his existence. The princess on her arrival, learning what had happened, also sunk beneath the shock, and died. Two [illegible]e-stones still mark the place where they were buried side by side.

12 Having explored the beauties of Loch Maree, either by sailing down its calm waters, or traversing the rugged path that winds along its rocky shore, we leave Kinloch Ewe by a road which runs south-east among the hills; and at Auchnasheen join the more public road which leads from Loch Carron to Dingwall. Our way is now for some time through a pastoral country, where there is little to excite attention, save the dark heights of Scuirvuillin, and the neighbouring hills, and the chain of lakelets which are connected by the river Braan.

13 Loch Luichart, though divested of the noble forest that once clothed its shores, has still an interesting appearance,

and is not destitute of wood. Winding round its banks, which are often screened by fine copse-covered cliffs, we are brought, after passing through a moory tract, to a smiling vale, enlivened by the waters of Loch Garve; and soon after, if we keep the high road, we reach the falls of the Rogie, which have been compared to those of Tivoli, and which, being situated among the birch-clad dells which are overlooked by the road, are easily reached by a footpath that has been formed for the purpose. From the neighbourhood of Garve, however, the pedestrian may make his way through a woody pass to Loch Echiltie, a lake of exceeding beauty, which he should not omit visiting. Having reached its banks he may, if so inclined, make an excursion by the road which he will there find leading westward, and which will conduct him to the falls of the Conon; and returning the same way, he may either retrace his steps to the road which he had left at Garve, or may proceed by that which leads direct from Loch Echiltie to Contin; from which in this case he will require to return a little westward, in order to see the Falls of the Rogie.

14. From Contin, (unless we wish to visit Strathpeffer, in which case we turn off to the left), we proceed along the banks of the Conon, which flows through a richly-wooded vale, and turning aside awhile from the high road, we wander by the wooded banks of the beautiful Loch Ousie, a small lake to which tradition attaches an origin somewhat similar to that which it ascribes to Loch Awe. Some heedless wight, it is said, having gone to draw water at an enchanted well in the neighbourhood, had neglected, after doing so, to replace the stone on its mouth; and the genius of the spring, attaching, it would seem, a mystical importance to the performance of this ceremony, did from his dark abode, at the witching hour of night, eructate a deluge of water, which, settling down in the hollow of the vale, formed the lake of which we speak. From many points in the neighbourhood of this loch, and especially from the top of that ridge which must be crossed

in passing directly over to Strathpeffer, the most magnificent views may be obtained of Ben Wyvis, which rears its huge bulk within a few miles to the north, and of the dark and rugged hills in the west, which contrast finely with the still lake on which we look back. On an eminence in this ridge (the Druimchat, or Cat's back), there is a vitrified fort named Knockfarrel, which has excited much interest among antiquaries.

Passing Conon Bridge, and gazing up the river on whose banks, amidst a splendid amphitheatre of cliffs and woods, stands the ancient Castle Brahan, we pass onward through the Muir of Ord, around which many ancient stone circles, cairns, and monumental pillars are to be found; and soon after, entering Inverness-shire, we reach Beauly, or Beaulieu,—so named, it is said, by Queen Mary, and well deserving the name. Here there are the ruins of a priory, whose grey walls, still pretty entire, are seen among the trees on the bank of the river. Two miles further on we are led into a scene which is not surpassed in beauty by any in the Highlands. On one hand the magnificent woods of Beaufort spread their wide and dense luxuriance; while, nearer, the river Beauly pours its dark waters down from a glen in which rocks, woods, and hills, are mingled together in the wildest, yet most graceful and harmonious profusion; and winding for awhile, still and deep, between rocks, which in shape and structure seem like the huge towers and walls of some gigantic castle, they dash over a broad ledge, roaring and foaming, and then continue their peaceful way through a fair and fertile vale, till they expand into the Frith of Beauly. Wandering up the course of this winding river for about three miles, we find at every turn some peculiar and exquisite combination of rock, wood, and water, and though the road runs all the way near its banks we are not satisfied till we have dived through every clump or screen of trees that intercepts our view of the stream's wild course, and gazed from every projecting cliff upon the whirl-

ing eddies of the impetuous river, as it rushes around the lofty rocks that rise in the midst of its rugged channel. Having advanced along the banks of the river to where it pours its waters around the verdant isle of Aigas, beyond which the road leading through Strathglass presents for some time comparatively little that is interesting, except the stately towers of Erchless Castle five miles onward, we retrace our steps from the Dhruim to Kilmorack, and thence proceed along the road which conducts us by the banks of Loch Beauly to Inverness.

[16] Without waiting to describe the town of Inverness or its immediate neighbourhood, we proceed onward to the mournfully interesting moor of Culloden, the scene of the desperate and bloody battle which extinguished the sanguine hopes of Charles Edward. About six miles from Inverness we reach the spot where the graves, or rather pits, in which the slain, by hundreds, were interred, are marked by patches of rank grass amid the surrounding wastes of bleak and dreary heath. It was a little to the west of this that the troops of the Prince were drawn up, in a line across the moor verging towards the grounds of Culloden House. In such a situation—so manifestly disadvantageous for a Highland army, did the fatigued and wasted forces of the unfortunate Charles Edward encounter the disciplined troops of the Duke of Cumberland; and after an almost incredible display of fierce and savage bravery, exerted in the cause of one whose family so long sat like an incubus upon the throne of the kingdom, they left the field strewn with the bodies of 1200 slain on each side, to which the Duke of Cumberland afterwards added a hecatomb of the prisoners, sacrificed in cold blood upon the altar of remorseless vengeance. The Prince, as soon as hope seemed to have abandoned him, made off toward Stratherrick and spent the night at Gortuleg. About a mile south east of the field of Culloden is a very remarkable series of stone circle and cairns. They cover a large extent of ground on the south

bank of the river Nairn; and near the west end of the plain on which they stand is an oblong square, believed to be the remains of an ancient Christian church, which, probably, had been purposely erected in the midst of these heathen structures. The most singular of these pagan relics are three great cairns, each fifteen feet high, in the interior of one of which, when it was lately opened, two earthen urns were found, containing calcined bones.

17 Leaving these antiquities, we proceed onward to Cawdor Castle, which is still inhabited, and presents an appearance of great antiquity in a high state of preservation. Its situation is striking and picturesque, and the associations connected with it invest it with a dark and romantic interest. Till lately, the bed and chamber were shown in which, it is said, King Duncan was murdered by his relative, Macbeth; but some years ago they were destroyed by fire. Still, however, the gloomy towers recall the scene represented by Shakspeare, and make our blood curdle as we seem to hear the remorseless queen exclaim,

> "I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dashed his brains out, had I so sworn as you
> Have done to this."

CANTO III.

[1] Leaving Inverness by the Caledonian canal, and passing the ship-shaped mount of Tomnahurich (the Hill of the fairies) we enter the beautiful little Lake of Dochfour; and, passing between its woody banks, we soon reach Loch Ness. Had we for the first time to pass through the great glen of Scotland, it is probable that we should prefer going by land, and keeping the northern bank of Loch Ness, which is beautifully wooded, and in traversing which the winding road affords a fine variety of view. At present, however, we choose to go by water, satisfied with the recollections of former rambles which are called up by the various objects which present themselves on the indented shore as we sail along.

[2] Passing on the south the woods of Aldourie, the birthplace of Sir James Mackintosh, and on the north, the bare rocks of Craigderg, our attention is arrested on the latter side of the lake by the ruined walls of Castle Urquhart, which stand on a rocky peninsula near the mouth of the glen of the same name. Two or three miles up this glen are the fine falls of Dhivach, formed by the abrupt descent of the Coiltie, over a lofty ledge of rock, surrounded by richly-wooded banks. From this point the northern margin of the lake continues to present a beautiful variety of rock and wood, in the midst of which, if we go by land, we are sometimes surprised by fine cataracts, one of the highest of which is that called Aultguis, a little west of Ruisky, from which there is a ferry over to Foyers.

[3] We land at the point where the river Foyers flows calmly into the lake—seeming to have forgotten all the turmoil of its

wild career among the rocks above—and wind up among the woody banks of the dell through which it pours. In a short time we find a path which conducts us to different points of observation from which the falls may be viewed. Having descended as far as possible into the deep ravine through which the waters rush at the lower fall, and where they are seen pouring in one unbroken mass of foam through a gap in the cliffs above, that close round on all sides, we retrace our steps to the heights from which the waters flow. Here we proceed up the rugged course of the river, where it rolls impetuously among rocks and birch-crowned steeps, and at the distance of about half-a-mile we reach the upper fall. This is not so high as the other, but compensates by the wild beauty of the surrounding scenery for its deficiency in height. Looking down from beneath the bridge which spans the rolling flood, we see the waters dashing tumultuously over the dark rocks below, while from the same point we behold their headlong course among the shattered cliffs above.

4 Seeking the beach again, we re-embark where the river mingles calmly with the smooth waters of the lake, and, as we sail along we mark on a green eminence of the shore which we have left, a simple pyramidal monument, erected on the spot where the daughter of Mr. Fraser, of Foyers, requested that her ashes might be laid—that having been her favourite resort during the later years of her life · and here also rest the remains of her father and mother

5 As we cast our eyes upon the opposite shore, we are struck with the beauty of the wildly luxuriant glen through which the burn of Aultsigh pours its pure waters, dashing between the birch clad eminences, and over the shelving rocks, till it reaches the calm bosom of the lake. This lovely glen is associated with one of the darkest of those tales of blood which have been handed down from the ages of feudal anarchy. A party of the Mc Donells, of Glengarry, having entered the

country of their hereditary rivals, the Mc Kenzies, to avenge an attack which had been made upon them in a former inroad, found a number of their opponents assembled for worship at Gillie Christ (Christ's Church) near Beauly. Their leader commanded the church to be set on fire, and ranged the band of the Mc Donells round it to prevent the escape of his victims, who thus, by fire and sword, were indiscriminately massacred; whilst a piper marched round the church playing a piece of wild extempore music, which has since continued to be the pibroch of the Glengarry family. The Mc Donells having fled in two separate directions, were pursued by parties of the Mc Kenzies, and some of them, as they rested at a public-house near Inverness, were overtaken, and met with a death similar to that which they had just inflicted. Others, with their leader Alan Mc Raonuill, fled to the northern banks of Loch Ness, but the Mc Kenzies, tracking their footsteps, reached them as they lay reposing among the hills near Aultsigh, to which Alan immediately fled, and, being closely pursued by one of the Mc Kenzies, he leaped over a wide and deep chasm through which the burn pours. His pursuer, attempting to follow, but failing to reach the top of the opposite bank, grasped the branch of a tree, by which he hung suspended over the ravine. Alan observing this, turned back and lopped off the branch with his dirk, exclaiming: "I have left much behind me with you to-day; take that also."

6 A little further on on the same side of the lake, is the opening of Glen Moriston—a vale of exquisite beauty, luxuriantly adorned with woods of birch and pine, amidst which the river of the same name pours its silver flood, divided at some distance up the glen by a rock, on either side of which it descends in a fine cascade, and, uniting again, hurries onward to a lofty precipice over which it falls into a deep pool guarded on one side by Craig Kinian—the Giant rock, and on the other by Sthone-na-Muich the promontory of the Boar,

from between which the river rushes onward impetuously to the lake.

7 Having reached the extremity of Loch Ness, at which stands Fort Augustus, we soon after enter Loch Oich, on the banks of which stands Invergarry Castle, surrounded with magnificent woods which stretch far into Glengarry,—the distant view being bounded by the mountains of the wide and fair domain which was long the property of the chief of the McDonells, but has now passed from that family, whose representative was abroad on both occasions when the author visited this region

8 The banks of Loch Lochy do not present much that is interesting; but the fine Loch of Aikaig, which lies not many miles from its northern side, is well worthy of being visited. The river Lochy, sweeping past the interesting ruins of Inverlochy Castle, rushes with such impetuosity into the salt waters of Lochiel, when swollen by the mountain torrents after rain, that it preserves its freshness for a considerable time. The most prominent feature of the scenery around Fort William is the majestic Ben Nevis, the ascent of which is arduous, and even, without a guide, dangerous, but well repays the fatigue by the magnificence of the view which its heights afford.

9 Along the north shore of Locheil a road leads westward by which the scenery in that direction may be explored. Corpach, (the field of dead bodies,) from which this road strikes off, was so named from its having been the place to which the bodies of kings and nobles were anciently brought to be embarked for Iona; and at Inverlochy Castle the ancient kings of Scotland are said to have had their residence. About twelve miles from this point is Glenfinnan, at the head of Loch Shiel, where Prince Charles on his arrival from Glenalladale, was met by young Locheil with a party of seven or eight

hundred of his clan. Here his standard was unfurled by the Marquis of Tullibardine, and the manifesto and commission of regency were read. Shortly afterwards he was 'oined by Mc Donald, of Keppoch, with three hundred men; and in the evening some gentlemen of the name of Mc Leod arrived and proffered their services to the Prince. A monnment, surmounted by a statue of the Chevalier, still marks the pot.

[10] By pursuing this line of road, we would be led to the western coast and the district of Moidart; interesting, as being the scene of Charles Edward's arrival, of his wanderings after defeat, and of his departure from Scotland; and the inhabitants of which, still, to a great extent, as if from some affection for his memory, cling to the superstitions of the Roman Catholic faith.

[11] Our course, however, for the present, lies toward Glencoe; and accordingly, proceeding from Fort William down the banks of Loch Linnhe, and along the side of Loch Leven, we cross the ferry to Ballahulish; and, after advancing four miles further along Loch Leven, we enter the terrific pass through which flows the "roaring Cona" of Ossian, and in the midst of whose dark and dismal precincts the unsuspecting sons of the soil were massacred, during a winter night, by a party of troops sent for the purpose by the Master of Stair, and commanded by Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon. M'Ian, their chief, had made himself obnoxious to Stair, by opposing the project which he had formed for organising the Highland clans into a force for the support of King William's government; and, probably from this cause, the M'Donalds of Glencoe were specially excluded from the indemnity which was offered to those who, like M'Ian, had delayed to make their submission to government, or had been prevented from doing so within the required time. Accordingly the order for their extirpation was put in force with the utmost barbarity. Captain Camp-

bell, whose niece was married to one of M'Ian's sons, was, with his party, hospitably entertained by the inhabitants of the glen, whom, after having thus lived with them for a fortnight, they proceeded, amid the gloom of a winter night, to massacre in cold blood.

[12] Leaving Glencoe, we pass through a country which presents a wild and dreary aspect for some time, till we reach the beautiful vale of Glenorchy; soon after which, we arrive at Dalmally, at the head of Loch Awe, a magnificent lake, closed in with bold and lofty hills, of which Ben Cruachan in the north is always most conspicuous. The sides of the Loch are richly adorned with wood; and numerous green islands rise amid its calm waters, particularly towards the eastern extremity.

[13] One of the most conspicuous of these isles is that on which stand the fine ruins of Kilchurn, or Caolchairn Castle, which was built in 1440 by Sir Colin Campbell, a black knight of Rhodes, the founder of the Breadalbane family Of him a romantic legend is told, which is briefly related in the poem.

[14] On a small island, now nearly connected, by alluvial deposit, with the main-land, the Druids are said to have had a place of residence; hence it is named Innistrynich, or the Island of Druids; and, in opposition probably to this, when a place of Christian worship was first erected at Dalmally, it was called Clachan Dysart (Clach-an-les-aird) or the Temple of the Most High God. On the long, heathy island called Innishail, or the Beautiful Island, the ruins of a Cistercian convent are still seen. Innisfraoch, or the Heather Isle, presents the ruins of an ancient castle of the McNaughtans. It is the scene of a tradition thus related in an old Celtic poem: "The fair Mego longed for the delicious fruit of the isle, guarded by a dreadful serpent. Fraoch, who had long loved the maiden, goes to gather the fruit. By the rustling of the leaves, the serpent was awakened from his sleep. It attacked

the hero, who perished in the conflict. The monster also was destroyed. Mego did not long survive the death of her lover." From Dalmally we proceed along the banks of Loch Awe to Cladich, where the road ascends the hill for about a mile, and then descends into Glen Aray.

[15] When we approach within four miles of Inverary, this glen, with the river that winds through it, assumes an appearance of extreme beauty and luxuriance; and when Loch Fyne bursts upon our view—its calm waters contrasting delightfully with the far-stretching hills and bristling woods that spread interminably around—we feel as if nothing were wanting to complete our earthly paradise. Awhile we wander among the more open grounds that surround the castle of Inverary, and admire the magnificent trees that, singly or in groups and rows, spread their strong boughs and ample verdure wherever we turn. We then ascend the wooded steeps of Duniquaich, from the top of which we obtain a fine view of the surrounding domain, which in its serene magnificence, accords well with the associations which history connects with the name of its noble proprietor. Having here seen the sun set over the far hills, we are satiated for awhile with the gorgeous prospect; but next morning, anticipating the dawn, we thread our way along the woody banks of the Aray, where the grey light is still more obscured by the shadowing trees. The roar of Carlonan Linn soon falls upon our ear; and ere long the foaming cascade is seen dashing over the dark cliffs among the weeping boughs that hang around. Tracing the river further up its wild course, we reach another Linn, about two or three miles beyond the first, and ere long we catch the sound of Lenach Gluthin, where, from a rustic bridge over a dark chasm in the rocks, we see the Aray rushing headlong into the deep abyss below.

[16] Returning again along the banks of the stream, we wander eastward through the woods till we find ourselves in

the sequestered dell of Glen Shira,—the Vale of the Silent Stream, and rest awhile beside the dark, still waters of Loch Dubh. Thence we find our way back to Inverary, and after satiating ourselves with gazing on the surrounding scenery, we prepare to take our departure towards the Clyde, which may be done either by proceeding across the hills by the lone Glencoe to Loch Long, or by crossing in another direction to Loch Goilhead—or by going to Tarbet on the banks of Loch Lomond,—as from all these points a steam-boat will be found ready to convey us towards Glasgow. A less frequented, but very pleasing route, is that by the banks of Loch Eck to Dunoon on the Clyde.

[17] But for the present we prefer taking the steam-boat which carries us down Loch Fyne and through the Kyles of Bute, a voyage in the whole course of which our eye is gladdened, and our mind kept awake by pleasing excitement, while the broken and winding shores discover, as we sweep along, some new object of interest; or while the bold, dark cliffs of the distant mountains are seen towering over the green heights that skirt the loch, or swelling abruptly from the bosom of the deep—as when Arran bursts in all its rugged majesty on our view.

[1] Having reached Rothsay and explored the beauties of its situation, and the antiquities of its ruined palace,—the scene of the death of Robert III.—we might probably find an opportunity of visiting Arran, to which steamers sail from Glasgow, and where, besides the interesting associations which connect its shores with the brightening prospects of Robert the Bruce, we should find a peculiar charm in the wild solitudes of the heathy and rocky dells that wind among the abrupt and craggy hills amid which Ben Ghoil, the Mountain of the Winds, rises pre-eminent. If, however, as was the case with the author, we have already visited that romantic island, we may be con-

tented with the splendid view of its blue hills which is obtained from the Ayrshire coast, whither we cross from Rothsay; and where, wandering along the woody heights that rise around Kelburne Castle, we think, as we gaze over the waters now resting so calmly before us, of the battle which once raged along these shores, and of the elemental strife which, in 1263, destroyed the invading fleet of the Danes. Casting our eyes downward along the gleaming flood where it rolls between Arran and the Carrick shore, we are reminded of "the remarkable occurrence," by which, as Sir Walter Scott says, "Bruce was induced to enter Scotland, under the false idea that a signal fire was lighted upon the shore near his maternal castle of Turnberry—the disappointment that he met with, and the train of success that arose out of that very disappointment." *

The splendid scenery of the Clyde is too well known, and too patent to the view even of the casual passenger, to require any particular description. But, noting merely the magnificent effect of the different mountain ranges that converge at the opening of Loch Long, we would invite all who have an eye and a soul for the serenely beautiful and the sternly grand to turn aside with us and contemplate nature in both these aspects, while they stand upon the wooded shores of Roseneath and gaze upward over the calm waters of the Gareloch, toward the dark hills of Arroquhar.

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* See Barbour's *Bruce*, book iv. vol. i.

CANTO IV.

¹ The scenes through which we are now for awhile led to wander are those which have been so graphically described by Sir Walter Scott, in works which are in the hands of almost every one, that it would be presumptuous, as it is altogether needless, to introduce our feeble lamp to guide the steps or direct the eyes of the tourist where the blaze of that mighty genius shines in its strength, and irradiates every green recess, and gleams on every "purple peak and flinty spire." It were a work of supererogation even to point out the road—trodden as it is by the feet of a thousand pilgrims—clouded as it is with the dust of unnumbered vehicles—and worn by as many hoofs as when "clattered an hundred steeds along" led by the bold Fitz James—which leads to the enchanted precincts of the wildly beautiful scene aptly denominated the Trosachs, or the *Bristled Region*. We shall therefore content ourselves with merely indicating the situation of those localities which are most interesting from their own character, or from the associations which the wand of the great magician has connected with them.

Leaving Callander, it may be well to turn aside to visit the romantic pass of Leney, before we proceed onward to Coilantogle Ford, at the lower extremity of Loch Venachar, where Roderick Dhu was vanquished by Fitz-James. Thence we advance along the banks of the lake, passing Lanrick Mead, the mustering place of Clan Alpin, where the road diverges from the shore. A little further on, on a rising ground toward the left, are—Duncraggan's huts,

"That peep, like moss-grown rocks half-seen,
Half-hidden in the copse so green."

Between Lochs Venachar and Achray, the Brig of Turk crosses the stream, which flows from Glenfinlas and here

joins the Teith; and about a mile and a half further on, on the side of Loch Achray, stands the Inn of Ardchincrochcan. Advancing from this point, we enter the Bristled Region of which we are in quest. On one side towers Benvenue, on the other Ben A'an, while the intermediate distance is occupied by rocks, knolls, trees, copse-clad heights, and grey crags, heaped together, and scattered, and intermingled in the wildest confusion, yet in the most delightful harmony. The Defile of Beal-an-Duine, through which we pass, is the place where Fitz-James's "gallant grey" fell exhausted in the chase, and gave him leisure to survey the wondrous scene into which he had been brought. Wandering onward, we perceive a narrow inlet shooting in among the broken rocks and scattered trees, and warning us of our approach to Loch Katrine, which is soon seen stretching far between the dark hills that rise abrupt and bold towards the left, and the more varied and indented margin on the right. Here we view the verdant "Isle"—the retreat of the fair Helen,—and there in the rugged bosom of Benvenue, where it rises sheer from the lake, a deep gash marks the wild and lonely Coir-nan-Uriskin, the *Den of the Ghost*, to which Douglas removed his daughter from the enchanted precincts of the lovely island. Higher up the hill, among the craggy ravines of Benvenue, winds the pass, which, from its having often yielded a way by which the *reivers* of old days drove their cattle, received the name of Bealachnambo.

[2] Should the course of the traveller lie towards Loch Lomond, he will sail to the further end of Loch Katrine, and thence a rugged road will lead him to Inversnaid, on the banks of the former loch, from which a steamer will convey him to Balloch at its southern extremity. For the present, however we prefer to bend our steps toward Loch Ard, which we reach by striking off from Loch Arklet near the western end of Loch Katrine, and passing the secluded Loch Chon Both Upp and Lower Loch Ard are best viewed from their eastern ex

tremity, where the distant heights of Benlomond, bounding the view westward, contrast finely with the still waters of the glassy lake and its green islands and woody shores.

3 Passing the junction of the Douchray and the Forth—or Avondhu, at the Clachan of Aberfoil, and traversing the Pass which brings to our remembrance the famed Rob Roy, we soon find ourselves on the peaceful banks of the Lake of Monteith, and gaze for a while on its placid flood and its interesting islands, in one of which is the ancient castle of the Earls of Monteith, while the other contanis the burial-ground of the Grahams and the ruins of the Priory of Inchmahome, where Mary Queen of Scots found an asylum in her early days, after the battle of Pinkie, and where a box-wood bower with a hawthorn tree in the centre is still pointed out as having been planted by her.

4 Having now reached the verge of the Highlands, we rest for a space by the banks of this still lake, and give scope to the thoughts which are suggested by the sight of its ruined priory, whose grey walls are seen gleaming in the moonshine. We think of those days when the darkness of superstition brooded over the land, and our thoughts are led onward to the struggle and the contest, the suffering and the toil through which the children of the light had to pass before the cause which they were called to support gained its destined triumph, and the purifying influence of the truth was allowed, unobstructed, to exercise its peaceful sway. The hills, among which our forefathers sought a refuge from the persecutions adverted to in the text, do not, it is true, for the most part, lie within that region which is distinctively denominated the Highlands; but at the Lake of Monteith, occupying, as it does, an intermediate place, both as to locality and character, between the northern and southern districts of Scotland, thoughts naturally occur which are suggested rather by what is common to both these regions than by that which is peculiar to the

immediate subject of the poem. The following extracts, however, from Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, are given as showing that the north, where in our days so much zeal and intelligent piety are to be found, was not quite undistinguished of old, either by zealous adherence to the truth, or by the asylum which it afforded to those who suffered for conscience sake.

"Even in the Highlands the Covenant was welcomed with amazing cordiality. Clans that rarely met but in hostile strife, and if they did meet never parted without exchanging blows, met like brothers, subscribed the bond of national union, and parted in peace and love. Nowhere was this unwonted but lovely sight more signally displayed than at Inverness. There the fierce feuds of ages melted and disappeared beneath the warming and renewing power of Divine influence which so strongly and brightly shone around the Covenant, as the snows melt from their native mountains when the summer sun is high in the smiling heavens."

"The year 1663 began with great hardships to both the ejected ministers and the deprived people of Scotland. The ministers were compelled to leave their houses, the scenes of their ministry, the people whom they had been accustomed to instruct with such anxious and successful care in the knowledge of the way of salvation,—all that they held dear on earth, and much that had been to them both the earnest and the foretaste of heaven,—and to hasten away to other districts, chiefly those north of the Tay, in the depth of a stern, inclement Scottish winter, because they would not bring upon their souls the guilt of perjury."

CANTO V.

1 Returning again to the Highlands, we leave the shores of the Clyde where the proud rocks, surmounted by Dumbarton Castle—the ancient Balclutha, frown sternly over the calm waters; and winding along the banks of the Leven, where Smollet "tuned his rural pipe to love," we find ourselves, at the extremity of this beautiful vale, on the shores of Loch Lomond, the Queen of the Scottish lakes. Magnificent, truly, is the view which this vast sheet of water, with its surrounding hills and embosomed isles, presents to our eye as we gaze over its silvery tide, from the heights above Tullichewan Castle, or from any of the neighbouring eminences; and strong is the attraction by which we are drawn to commit ourselves to its peaceful breast, or to wander along its wooded side. We make choice of the road which winds along the western margin of the lake; and, leaving on our left Dunfin, the hill of Fingal, which rises above the woods of Arden, we reach the gorge of Glenfruin, guarded by the ancient Castle of Bannahera. Lovely as the scene is which here surrounds us, a gloom seems to rest upon the "Vale of Sorrow" when we remember the bloody strife from which it derived its name. In 1602 the Mac Gregors encountered in Glenfruin the hostile bands of the Colquhoun, of whom 200 fell beneath their vengeful claymores. The widows of the slaughtered Colquhouns appeared at Stirling before James VI., each bearing on a pike the bloody shirt of her husband, and thus obtained the proscription of Clan Alp'n in consequence of which it was felony to bear the very name of Mac Gregor. Our thoughts, however, are soon diverted from these dark tales of other days when we gaze on the calm waters of the smiling lake,

with its peaceful islands, of which the chief is Inch Murrin, and among whose twining trees the roe-deer frisk, or couch unmolested. Awhile we wander among the still and verdant retreats of Rossdoe ere we resume our onward path, which soon leads us to the woods and sounding streams of Inverugas. Here, if our inclination leads us to undertake the ascent of Benlomond, we may procure a boat which will convey us to Rowardennan on the opposite shore. But if the splendid prospect which is to be obtained at a height of 3,262 feet should not be a sufficient inducement to undergo the toils of the ascent we may pursue our way to Tarbet, reconciling ourselves perhaps to the neglect of the great mountain by climbing the humbler eminence of the hill of Strone, from which we gaze over a prospect similar to that which presents itself at about a third part of the height of Benlomond. Either from Tarbet, or from the base of the mountain on the opposite shore we may proceed,—by water in the one case, and by land in the other,—to the Fort of Inversnaid, where the brave Wolfe served when a subaltern; and thence we may visit Rob Roy's cave on the north-east shore of the lake. Here we are in the midst of Rob's peculiar domain, and all the associations connected with his name rise to our recollection;—but not these alone, for in this cave Robert the Bruce concealed himself the night after he had lost the battle of Strathfillan

2 Returning to Tarbet, we find a road which leads us northward through Glenfalloch and Strathfillan; and, reaching Crianlarich, though our route lies toward Killin, we are induced to turn aside for a little while from the road that leads thither that we may visit the celebrated pool of St. Fillan, which lies two miles toward the north, on the road conducting to Tyndrum. To this pool lunatics were wont to be brought from all quarters to be immersed, and here Robert Bruce, conceiving that his cause had been aided by the arm of St. Fillan, which he bore with him to Bannockburn, established

a priory which was consecrated to that saint. Near Tyndrum lies the plain of Dalrigh, where Bruce was defeated by Mac Dougal, of Lorn, in 1366. Retracing our steps to Crianlarich, we thence proceed eastward, passing Loch Dochart, at the foot of Ben More, in which lake there is a floating island, formed by the twining roots and stems of water plants. Pursuing our course along the river Dochart, we reach Killin at the head of Loch Tay. Here is a small island formed by the river and planted with furs, and on which an arched gateway points out the ancient tomb of the Mac Nabs. Killin is said to derive its name from being the burial place of Fingal, and here his supposed grave is still pointed out.

3 The heights of Stroneclachane near the village, command a delightful view, on one hand, of the vale watered by the roaring Dochart and the soft flowing Lochy, and on the other, of the calm expanse of Loch Tay, beautifully contrasting with the bristling steeps of Finlarig, and the distant peaks of the majestic Lawers. Fixed as the waters of this lake appear in imperturbable stillness, they have at times been subject to extraordinary agitations. In September, 1784, when the weather was calm, the water in the bay near Kenmore receded about five yards, and after alternately ebbing and flowing to that extent for a quarter of an hour, rushed on a sudden from east to west, forming by the meeting currents a great wave across the bay of the height of five feet, and leaving the shore dry to the extent of 100 yards below the usual limits of the lake. This wave flowed westward, gradually diminishing, and when it disappeared, the water returned beyond its original margin in the bay, and continued to ebb and flow for about two hours. Meanwhile the river on the north of the village ran back, leaving its channel dry. Similar agitations occurred on five succeeding days, and again at subsequent periods.

In proceeding towards Kenmore, we choose the road which winds among the fine woods on the southern shore of the

lake, and before reaching Taymouth, we turn aside to view the falls of Acharn, and the hermitage which affords a grateful rest in the midst of the wild dell through which the waters rush.

We have not space in these notes to enlarge upon the exquisite beauties of the scenery of Taymouth—to describe the magnificence of the wide extended lawn with its majestic trees, in the midst of which stands the noble castle—in all respects worthy of the scene which surrounds it—and built, it is said, in the style of the ancient Castle of Inverlochy, the residence in old times of Scotland's kings, or to speak of all the delight which may be felt in gazing from the heights of Drummond Hill, or wandering amid the green retreats of the Berceau walk. This, however, we cannot but remark, that the loveliness of Nature is here heightened by associations of a very different kind from those which connect the recollections of bloody feuds and unnatural strife with many a fair Highland scene. It were little, indeed, that royalty has here made its temporary abode, and that royal magnificence for a time imparted to these scenes a lustre soon to pass away, did we not know that from the same loyal and truly patriotic heart which devised so splendid a reception for its sovereign, there flows forth over these wide domains a permanent stream of benignant and beneficent feeling—guided in its practical manifestation by an intelligence and a stedfast purpose, which is not to be turned aside by the example of worldly politicians, or the false prejudices which rule in too many aristocratic breasts, but which follows rather in the footsteps of the worthies of other days. And not only is it from living worth that these scenes derive a moral charm, but from the memory of those days when the loveliness with which Nature here is clothed was wont to minister sweet thoughts to the musing spirit of the excellent Lady Glenorchy, who regarded Taymouth with peculiar affection, not only on account of its own beauties, but from its being the birthplace of her spiritual life, and her favourite retreat from a vain and distracting world.

4 Reluctantly leaving Taymouth, we proceed through the vale watered by the Tay, and soon arrive at Aberfeldy, near which the Falls of Moness attract and detain our steps, at once by the associations with which the harp of Burns has connected them, and by the wild beauty of the rocky dell through which they pour their dashing waters, overhung by the "Birks of Aberfeldy."

5 Pursuing our course along the south bank of the Tay, and passing Grandtully, and Glanalbert, the scene of Mrs. Brunton's "Self-Control," where a fine waterfall is to be seen, we reach the beautiful bridge across the Tay which conducts us into Dunkeld, and which itself affords one of the best points from which the scenery of this delightful spot can be viewed; the river—the wood-clad hills—the ivy-robed cathedral, with all the unnumbered and nameless elements that make up the exquisite scene, blending together in harmonious and peaceful beauty. The *coup d'œil*, however, which is here obtained only excites the desire to penetrate among the green and shady retreats that spread so invitingly around, and to climb the steeps that overhang the enchanted region, and close it in on all sides. Accordingly we thread our way among the trees that adorn the noble domain of the Duke of Athol; and, winding up the banks of the Braan, we are conducted to Ossian's Hall, where Art and Nature have combined their enchantments in what has appeared to some an incongruous union—whilst others rejoice to find, even in such a wild retreat, the traces of human ingenuity, and gaze, well pleased, on the evanishing form of the presiding bard, and on the vision of multiplied, and inverted, and deflected cataracts which is presented by the mirrored walls and roof, reflecting the watery war without. Further up the Braan is Ossian's Cave, beyond which the stream, rushing from beneath a natural bridge of rock,—called the Rumbling Brig, and dashing over a rugged precipice, forms a very striking scene Seeking now the

higher grounds, we gaze from the cliffs of Craig Kinean and Craig-y-Barns, and the King's Seat; and having thus surveyed the fair domains around, we descend again to the green banks of the Tay, and investigate the antiquities of the ancient abbey, which brings to our remembrance the still more ancient institution of the Culdees, out of which it grew, and which was here erected by the Pictish King Constantine in 729, when Dunkeld was the capital of Caledonia

6 Leaving Dunkeld, we proceed northward, by a road overshadowed and compassed about with luxuriant trees; and passing the small lake of Ordie, we reach the confluence of the Tay and Tummil, at Logerait. Further on is Pitlochrie, beyond which the Tummil receives the waters of the Garry. We are now near the entrance of the famed pass of Killiecrankie; but before penetrating its shady depths, we turn aside by a path leading from a gate near the bridge over the Garry, to the Falls of the Tummil, one of the scenes which attracted the special admiration of our gracious Queen, during her residence this year (1844) at Blair Athol, and well worthy the attention of royalty. The massy breadth of foam which dashes over the worn and shelving rocks, with the wild mountain scenery around, form a very striking picture. On the north-west of the fall, on the face of a frowning rock, is a cave where, it is said, a party of the proscribed Mac Gregors took refuge, but were surprised by their pursuers. Part of them having been slaughtered, the rest took shelter in a tree which overhung the fall, and which their enemies cut down, plunging them into the boiling flood.

7 We now retrace our steps to the bridge, and enter the pass of Killiecrankie,—a scene, once, of such unmingled gloom and terror that a party of Hessian troops, in 1745, refused to pass through it, deeming that they had come to the utmost verge of the world. Now, however, its aspect is much softened and beautified by the luxuriant trees which clothe its

rugged steeps; and the peace which now rests amid its still solitudes seems deepened when we remember how the storm of battle once raged along these banks and rocks, and when we mark the spot, where at the moment of victory, the proud soul of the bloody Dundee fled from its shattered tenement, and "went to its place." It was at the north end of the pass that, in 1689, the battle was here fought between the Highland army commanded by Dundee, and the troops of King William, under General Mackay.

8 Having traversed the pass, we reach Blair Athol, the scenery of which has long been so famous as to bring from afar the lovers of nature to gaze on its wild glories, but the attractive power of which has this year won a trophy brighter than it could boast before, in that it has drawn the august presence of royalty within the circle of these majestic hills, and that the fair queen of Scotland has shed the light of her delighted smiles on the loveliness of the scene. Here the prince of modern poets found the fittest abode in which the humble hero of his immortal poem might, in his early days, imbibe from the breast of Nature the purifying love of the beautiful and the good,—for "among the hills of Athol was he born;" and hither the young Queen of our Isle has led the youthful scion of her royal house, to drink in the healthful spirit of artless joy with the pure breeze of the hills, and to gambol along the heathery slopes with "the mountain nymph —sweet Liberty." In fancy we see the infant pedlar and the infant princess tripping together on a juvenile "Excursion," while the Queen on her *shelty*, and the Laureate on his Pegasus, scamper in company over hill and dale unobstructed by the rolling waters that cross their path,—

"Tramp, tramp, tramp along the land,
And splash, splash, splash across the stream."

Undoubtedly such a vision is much more accordant with the

simple grandeur of the scenery around than the pomp and parade of royal splendour would be; and we feel no constraint or incongruity of situation, while the image of majesty in a "plaid," escorted by the "sole king rocky Cumberland," seems to glide along with us as we wander through the wilds of Glen Tilt, or gaze upon the falls of the Fender, or feast our soul with the mingled delights of the surrounding scene, while the fresh breeze blows about us as we stand on some commanding eminence. Nor are our musings distracted by the presence of rusticating royalty, while we listen to the tumultuous roar of Bruar's rushing waters as they tumble over the birch-shaded rocks.

It may be here remarked that this is not the first instance of royal pastimes among the glens of Athol; for tradition relates that Queen Mary also visited these scenes, and that, surrounded by her courtiers in the chase, she fell from her steed into one of these mountain streams. While she was carried by the rapid flood, Leslie, a scion of the noble house of Rothes, dashed into the torrent, and laid hold upon the drowning queen, while she exclaimed, "Grip fast," which has since been the motto of the family of Rothes.

9 Here, however, we must take leave of her Majesty and of Blair Athol, for we have a visit to pay to sundry old friends in the north before we bring our wanderings to an end. First, the cheerful shade of good old Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, invites us to make an excursion among the "mountains" which gave birth to her delightful "letters;" and while we stray by the green banks of Loch Garry, she points out to us some curious little hillocks or *tomhans*, in which the fairies were supposed to dwell, and concerning which she repeats to us an old ballad, of which the following is the substance. "A little girl had been innocently loved by a fairy who dwelt in a tomhan near her mother's habitation. She had three brothers, who were the favourites of her mother. She herself was treated harshly, and tasked beyond her strength. Her employment was to go

every morning and cut a certain quantity of turf from dry heathy ground for immediate fuel, and this with some uncouth and primitive instrument. As she passed the hillock which contained her lover, he regularly put out his hand with a very sharp knife of such power that it quickly and readily cut through all impediments. She returned cheerfully and early with her load of turf; and as she passed by the hillock she struck on it twice, and the fairy stretched out his hand through the surface and received the knife. The mother, however, told the brothers, that her daughter must certainly have had some aid to perform the allotted task. They watched her, saw her receive the enchanted knife, and forced it from her. They returned, struck the hillock, as she was wont to do, and when the fairy put out his hand they cut it off with his own knife. He drew in the bleeding arm in despair, and supposing this cruelty was the result of treachery on the part of his beloved, never saw her more." With such "Superstitions of the Highlanders," Mrs. Grant entertains us while she conducts us among the wild haunts that spread around her old abode amidst the hills of Laggan; and amongst other associations connected with the district, we are reminded that in a cave at the southern extremity of Loch Ericht, Charles Edward found refuge shortly before his escape from Scotland. Having conducted us through the wild vale watered by the Spey, pausing with us to admire the beauty of Loch Insh, and pointing out, as we pass along, the old den of the Wolf of Badenoch, Mrs. Grant hands us over, at Belville, to the charge of its proprietor Mr. McPherson, the translator,—or as some would have it, but as both he and Mrs. Grant indignantly, and we believe truthfully, deny,—the author of Ossian's Poems. We greet the shade of this worthy gentleman not with the less interest as knowing that the descending stream of his poetical blood has not lost itself in the oozy sands, but that after winding, deep though silent, around a lofty and venerable tower, and reflecting on its calm bosom the stars on which the watcher there loves to gaze, it has

bounded away, gushing and purling in mellifluous music, among rocks and ruins haunted by remembrance of the "days of other years." With Mr. Mc Pherson we wander awhile among the rich woods of Kinrara, yielding ourselves to the thoughts and associations which, in his presence, are naturally awakened by the serene aspect of Loch Alvie, with its overhanging hill, and which are heightened and diversified, as we wander onward towards the head of Strathspey, by the glorious expanse of interminable and thick-massed woods which spread over the teeming vale of Rothiemurchus, terminated only by the dark steeps of the blue Cairngorm.

10 But we must now retrace our steps to Blair Athol, from whence we find our way over the hills to Strathairdle, and there cast anchor after the pleasing toil of our long wanderings. Here the bard finds a kindly welcome at the abode of his chief, where he pours his last lay, after chirping for a while in the "Dell of Birds," and casting a retrospective glance along the vale of time, as he sits upon the grave of Airdle, a Danish prince who was slain while leading an incursion into this strath, from which his followers were driven by the inhabitants. If the gigantic dimensions of this grave—twenty feet being its original length—should prompt a sigh, sympathetic with the lamentation of our great Chalmers, over the present age of "little *measures* and *little men*," we have at least this consolation, that in him who uttered that plaint, and in his worthy compeers, we have sensible demonstration, that, if not in the department of physical power, or of political sagacity, at least in that of moral worth and spiritual vigour, and intellectual attainment, we have yet among us men whose stride is as bold, and whose arm is as muscular as that of the giants that were in the land in those bygone days to which he looks back with a fond regret.

THE SCOTTISH MARTYRS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the narrative parts of the following poem, the incidents and descriptions are to be regarded rather as generally characteristic of the times they are introduced to illustrate than as founded on any particular historical account—except in those cases in which the names of the sufferers are given, either in the text or in the notes.

In some instances the groundwork of the narrative is in part taken from history or tradition, while the particulars are imaginary. Thus the unchecked though secret progress of the Reformation after the martyrdom of Hamilton, is illustrated by some incidents which might be supposed to be such as led to the conversion of Alexander Kennedy, who suffered at the age of eighteen, and of whose life, previous to his martyrdom, little is known, except what relates to his intimacy with Jerome Russel a grey friar, who was apprehended along with him on the charge of heresy, and whose example and encouragement tended much to uphold him in the prospect of that fiery death to which they were led together.

THE SCOTTISH MARTYRS.

FREEDOM! how deep the feelings and how strong,
That fill the Minstrel's breast and prompt his song,
When listening crowds attend his joyful lays,
That tell thy triumphs or proclaim thy praise!
How thrills the heart, responsive to the strains
That speak of tyrants fallen and broken chains;—
Of those who, in the fields of patriot strife,
Upon thy shrine have offered up their life—
The rich libation of their blood have poured,
And in their death-song still thy power adored!
And, in *his* breast who strays in musing mood,
When silence reigns with peaceful solitude,
Amid the scenes where most thou lov'st to dwell,
What lofty thoughts—what grateful feelings swell!
There, as with pensive step he roams along,
In praise of Thee how bursts his joyful song!
How sweet it harmonizes with the sound
Of chainless winds and wand'ring brooks around—
Symphonious swelling with the song of praise
The cageless birds amid the forest raise!
And, o'er the earth if far he stretch his way,
Or free o'er Ocean's pathless desert stray,
How lovely from afar appears the shore
Which thy fond spirit seems to hover o'er!
What grace and dignity thy charms can give
The bleakest scene where thou hast deigned to live!

And, when Imagination's eye surveys
The varied scene that History's page displays;
Or when she leads the mind's excursive flight,
And gives all Earth's dominions to its sight,
On what high favour'd region can it rest,
By Freedom made more lovely or more blest;
Or where in that wide survey can it find,
Amid the varied haunts of human kind,
A spot where dwells fair Freedom more secure,
And where her priceless gifts are kept more pure—
Guarded by hands more bold, by hearts more true,
By souls that tyrant-force can less subdue—
Than that immortal land where Wallace rose,
Where Bruce's band beat back their countless foes?
Yes, Scotia! dear to all thy children hold
The claim to be by Right alone controlled,—
With Freedom o'er thy hills and plains to roam,
Or taste with *her* the sacred joys of home,—
Besides the unviolated hearth to rest,
Where no intruding footstep dares molest.

But what, O Freedom! is the gift divine
Thou bearest with those earthly boons of thine?
What is that gift, the greatest and the best—
Ay! dearer to the soul than all the rest—
That gift for which thy worthy sons forego,
With willing heart, all else thou canst bestow?
O! 'tis the power unchecked by human sway,
Their God to serve—their Conscience to obey!—
Invited guests, with God himself to meet,
And, at the table he has spread, to eat;—
Right on to follow, in the appointed way
The cloudy pillar indicates by day;

Or, if thou walk by Persecution's night,
To follow still the fiery column's light;—
To drink, in copious draughts, the streams that flow
From Heaven to cheer this barren earth below,—
Not in polluted cups or poisoned bowls,
By Priests doled out to cheat their thirsty souls.
But freely as it gushes from the fount
In Zion's beauteous hill—God's holy mount.
While this remains, though bleak and rough their path,
Though swept full oft by storms of human wrath,
Yet safe they walk with their Almighty Guide,
And know no fear while He is at their side.

The Bard whose breast is touched with heavenly fire,
Who consecrates to Freedom's cause his lyre,
Who, musing o'er the bliss her gifts impart,
Feels grateful raptures kindle at his heart,—
He, when the joy is given him to survey
The triumph and the spread of Freedom's sway,—
His sacrifice of praise first gladly given
To Him who rules the hosts of Earth and Heaven—
To freedom's champions when he turns his eyes,
And gives each hero his appropriate prize,
'Mid that bright throng, whom deems th' impartial bard
Worthy the highest praise—the first award?
Whose is the cause—whose are the deeds that seem
Most worthy to be made his muse's theme?
Oh! 'tis the *Patriot of the better land*,
Who dared the aggressor of its rights withstand,
Who counted not his life a sacrifice
Too great for that dear land beyond the skies!
Who well defended, as full well he knew,
What to the free men of *that land* was due;

Resisting to the death the power that strove
To rob them of their heritage above!

For ever sacred, then, and pure-enshrined
Within the fane of every Scottish mind,
Remain the cherish'd memory of those
Who dared a Bigot's tyrant power oppose;—
Who stood undaunted, and unflinching fell,
Guarding the breach of Freedom's citadel,
When they to whom the high award of Heaven,
The trust of Scotia's liberties had given,
Her sacred laws—her dearest rights despised,
And robbed her of the treasure most she prized.

And oh! my country! favour'd Scotia! Thou
So blest by Truth and Peace and Freedom now,
How shall thy debt be told to those who first
For thee the gates of Superstition burst!
And, when amid its dark, unhallowed cells,
Awhile Imagination musing dwells,
And peers with wondering and bewildered gaze,
Through the perplexing paths of "Mystery's"* maze,—
That mighty labyrinth whose sepulchral gloom
No pure, untainted beams of Truth illume,—
Where shines, direct from Heaven, no guiding ray,
To lead to regions of Eternal day,
How glows our love to Him who bade His light
Pierce through the darkness of that tenfold night,
And, beaming pure on the bewildered heart,
Its quickening, gladdening influence impart,

* "And upon her forehead was a name written, *Mystery*, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots."—*Rev.* xvii. 5.

And there the wish—the energy awake,
The bonds of Satan's slavery to break,—
The dead'ning fear of human power dispise,
Cheered by the hopes of an immortal prize!

Yet when the struggle to be free was past,
The iron chains of Error burst at last,
'Scaped from that place of darkness and despair,
Deprived no more the common light and air,
By haunting demons still were they pursued
O'er peopled plain and mountain solitude.
With death and torture arm'd, throughout the earth
The "triple Tyrant" * sent his minions forth;
And regal power, perverted from its course,
Swelled Persecution's tide to wilder force.
But vainly did that, whelming deluge pour,
Vainly from Earth the springing flowers it tore,
Its streams but fertilized the land the more.
'Twas by that flood's wild waves that first were borne
The plants of grace from southern regions torn,
On Scotia's barren strand to strike their root,
And free and high beneath her skies to shoot;
To flourish there, luxuriant, fresh and green,
And beautify her stern and rugged scene.†

* The Pope.

† "Another, and more probable account" of the introduction of Christianity into Scotland "is, that during the persecution raised by *Domitian*, the twelfth and last of the Cæsars, about A.D. 96, some of the disciples of the Apostle John fled into our Island, and propagated there the religion of Jesus" . . . . "That persecution," under *Dioclesian*, "became so hot in the south of Britain, as to drive many, both preachers and professors, into Scotland, where they were kindly received, and had the

And when these trees of righteousness decayed,
Chilled by dark Superstition's blighting shade,
That flood it was from other lands that bore
The uncorrupted seeds of truth once more,—
Washed to her shore the precious plants again,
To spread fresh verdure on her blasted plain *
And, rooted there with firmer hold at last,
Though wildly raged the storm and roared the blast,
Still, as more rude the angry tempest blew,
More deep they struck their roots—more high they
grew;
Nor could the force of the relentless gale
To bend their heaven-aspiring boughs prevail.
Shaken by Persecution's raving blast,
The more abundantly their seeds they cast,
And these, that else had fallen but at their side,
By that tempestuous blast were scattered wide,
And, thickly strewn upon the furrowed ground,
Sprang up, and spread luxuriance all around.

But not by seeds of truth profusely sown,
Was that abundant harvest reared alone:
Watered by many a Martyr's blood it grew,
And by the Spirit's heaven-descended dew.
And not in vain thy children, Scotia, viewed
Their martyred brethren, calm yet unsubdued,
Unflinching yield to torture and to death,
Pouring in songs of joy their latest breath.

Isle of Man, then in possession of the Scots, given them for their residence, and a sufficient maintenance assigned them."—Scots Worthies, *Introductory Chapter.*

* During the persecutions in England under Queen Mary, many persons were induced to seek an asylum in the adjacent kingdom of Scotland.

For gazing on that scene they well might feel
Aroused within their souls a kindred zeal,
And long to have that hope within their breast,
Which thus could death of all its stings divest;
And well, too, in their heart a scorn might rise,
For those who there looked on with gloating eyes,
In whose proud hearts th' anticipation swelled,
That thus the tide of Truth should be repelled.

So heaved the breast, so flashed the indignant eye
Of those who stood, no calm spectators, by,
When he * whose heaven-taught voice had raised again
The long unheard, almost forgotten strain
Of peace and joy that called mankind to trust
And live by faith,—by faith be counted just,—
He whose pure heart, with love to souls full fraught,
Anew the tidings of great joy had brought,
As back from southern realms the torch he bare
Lit from the fire God's hand had kindled there,
Soon as he shed its beams on Scotia's night,
Was crushed by those who feared and shunned the light.

Ah! not unmoved they saw the gentle youth
Who fearless bore the standard of the truth,
Noble by all that's great in human birth,
But nobler by a birth-right not of earth,
Enticed in vain by many a glittering lure,
And choosing with God's people to endure
Afflictions, bonds, the prison, and the stake,
Rather than sin's alluring joys partake.

* Patrick Hamilton, who was of royal descent, and who, having visited Germany, was there instructed in the doctrines of the Reformation, which, on his return, he fearlessly disseminated in Scotland.

No, not unmoved they marked his peaceful mien,
Unawed by torture, and in death serene.
Calm 'mid the flames his joyful voice arose;
It breathed no imprecation on his foes;
It called no fire from Heaven, no vengeful rod,
" To smite the foes of Zion, and of God;"
But joined on Earth the strains that rise in Heaven,
To martyred saints by inspiration given,
" How long, O Lord, shall darkness veil the land,
How long shall mortals dare thy dread right hand?
O Thou, who gav'st thy life that I might live,
" Into thy hands my trusting soul I give."

Yes, many a heart that long had sought to gain
Peace from Rome's pompous rites, but sought in vain,
Rejoic'd as one who, outcast, poor, despised,
Has found some hidden treasure, to be prized
Above all price, when they beheld the power
Of Faith to comfort in the darkest hour;
And deep their secret longings were, to know
More of the source from whence such peace could flow.
Nor from that fount, despite the jealous guard
That closed it round, could they be quite debarred.
In lonely places, where it secret flowed,
They drank, and went rejoicing on their road.

Not in the wind, whose mighty, rushing sweep
Rends the strong hills, and whirls the darkening deep;
Not in the earthquake, whose convulsive shock
Bids the wild floods roll back, the mountain's rock;
Not girt with clouds and fierce, devouring flame;
Not thus unto our land Jehovah came.
By wakeful hearts, lone listening there, was heard
The still, small voice of the peace-speaking Word.

Enter with me yon silent chamber's door,
There shall we see what balm that voice can pour
On the torn heart where else were nought but gloom,
And fearful looking for of coming doom.
See yon poor sinner, on his dying bed,
And mark the peace upon his bosom shed
By that pure light, new bursting from the skies,
That 'mid the darkness cheers his straining eyes.
That heart, erewhile, tossed on a shoreless flood,
Had cried, "O, who will show us any good?"
But now the Lord has lifted up the light
Of His own countenance to glad his sight;
And now, at last, the gentle dove, that brings
The olive branch of peace, there folds her wings.

'Twas but awhile ago that that pale brow,
And those dim eyes, which smile so calmly now,
Were shadowed o'er with clouds of anxious care,
Or lit by lurid flashes of despair.
The shades of death were brooding o'er his heart;
And there was that which would not let him part
In peace, but robbed his sinking soul of rest:
And a cold hand seemed lying on his breast.
For Conscience wields a sway of awful power
Amid the silence of that lonely hour
When man draws nigh to that mysterious place
Where he must meet his Maker face to face.
The world could not accuse him, but he felt
That He who in his secrecy had dwelt,
And compassed all his goings, and looked in
On every lurking place of hidden sin,
Had that against him which might sink him low
In the dark depths of everlasting woe.

Dimness and anguish o'er his spirit came,
Cold, restless tremors shook his dying frame,
And from his lips was wrung the bitter cry,
"How shall my soul find quiet ere I die?"

To him a gentle youth did minister,—
His only son—the image fair of her,
Who was the solace of his earlier years,
But fled before him from this vale of tears.
"Father," the boy replied, "the Church hath power
To give thee peace and pardon at this hour;
Be but thy sins to the good priest confessed,
And so shall comfort come upon thy breast:
He will anoint thee while thy soul shall take
Its flight from Earth, and on thy brow shall make
The blessed sign, and yet for many a day
To the kind Virgin and the Saints will pray
That soon thy soul, made pure from earthly stains,
May rise to dwell where holy Jesus reigns."
"'Tis true, my son; may Heaven forgive the thought
That wronged its mercy. Seek, then, Him who taught
How such as I in peace may yet depart;
And let him come and cleanse this sinful heart."

Forth hied the youth, and, eagerly intent
To find the priest, with hastening steps he went.
But o'er the old man's breast a dismal train
Of doubts and dark forebodings rose again.
The haunting memory of uncancelled guilt
Rose on his soul, too strong for comfort built
On human works; and Conscience would demand,
"Can mortal, then, between the spirit stand
And its all-seeing Judge? Can prayers avail
When at *His* bar the sinful soul shall quail?"

Meanwhile the boy a fruitless search had made
For the old priest, till Evening's dusky shade
Was thickening round; and then the home he sought
Of one he dearly loved, and who, he thought,
Might yield fit counsel to his anxious mind,
And guide his steps to where he yet might find
Some holy man, whose prayers and rites might roll
The weight of sin from off his father's soul.

A little band he found assembled there,
To hear the Heavenly message, and in prayer
To join their hearts, and in adoring praise:
For "the Lord's Word was precious in those days;"
And they whose hearts were touched by heavenly grace
At dead of night would seek some secret place,
Where he, that priceless treasure who possessed,
Would read its sacred pages to the rest;
And their hearts burned within them as they heard
Each blessed promise of God's faithful Word.
For there the Lord himself would with them meet,
"Opening to them the Scriptures;" and most sweet
Unto their thirsty souls those waters were,—
Those living waters which He gave them there.
Thus they who loved the Lord would often seek
Some place where to each other they might speak;
And of these hidden ones the Omniscient took
Account, and wrote their names within His book.

Such was the little band whom here the youth
Found, listening to the oracles of Truth.
And he upon whose lips they hung to hear
The precious Word, was one who had been dear
To him from childhood—one who had, like him,
Caught eagerly the light which, faint and dim,

Streamed through the darkness that was brooding round
And, ere the one true *source* of light he found,
Had vowed himself to Heaven, and gone to dwell
A rigid votary in monastic cell.
But there the truth had beamed upon his soul,
And he had yielded to its high control,
And his strong energies he now employed
To "preach the faith which once he had destroyed."

The youth, unwitting of the change so wrought
On this his old companion, him besought
His dying father's restless couch to seek,
And words of comfort to his soul to speak.
And cheerfully he went, and with him took
His guide and counsellor—the heavenly book.
And, seeking grace to aid him, thence he read
Of Him who on the cross for sinners bled.
He read of how upon that cross He cried
With a loud voice, "'Tis finished!" ere He died.
He held not up before that dying eye
The outward symbol of that work whereby
The Holy One and Just for sins atoned,
And crushed the Serpent—while He bled and groaned;
But to the sight of Faith did he display
The Lamb of God, who died to take away
The sin of a lost world. He strove to raise
The mourner's downcast eye, and bade him gaze,—
Feeling the plague that on his spirit preyed—
On Him whose voice, in love and mercy, said,
"Look, all ye ends of the Earth, look up to me,
And be ye saved." Thus he sought to free
From darkening doubts and fears that anxious heart,
And hope and peace of conscience to impart.

Nor were his efforts vain ; the power of Heaven
Wrought in that spirit, and its chains were riven ;
And now, behold, he walks at liberty,
Praise on his lips and rapture in his eye !
And his glad soul just hovers on the wing
A few brief moments, ere it rise to sing
The praises of the Lamb, with that bright band
Who round the throne in robes of glory stand.

Happy who, seeking thus his Father's home,
Is gently "taken from the ills to come."
But not less happy he whose youthful breast,
By the strong influence of that scene impressed,
And yielding to the Truth's subduing power,
Walks in the light from this decisive hour ;
And yet awhile remains behind to share
The afflictions of God's people, and to bear
Unflinching witness, 'mid a perverse race,
For him whose plenteous and long-suffering grace
Hath called him out of darkness. His shall be
A portion with that glorious company
Who, having meekly borne great sufferings here,
In blood-washed robes before the throne appear.

'Twere sad,—and yet 'twere sweetly sad—to dwell
On the dark annals of those days ;—to tell
Of him * who, as the silent field he trod,
And held high converse of the things of God
With one he loved, † fell prostrate when he heard
That dread denunciation of the Word,
"Him who denies me before men, will I
Before my Father and the saints deny ;"

* David Straiton. † The Laird of Lauriston.

And, raising up his awe-struck eyes to heaven,
Confessed his guilt, and prayed to be forgiven;
And cried, "O Lord, most justly might'st thou take
Thy grace from me, yet for thy mercy's sake
Uphold me by thy power, that fear or shame
May ne'er beguile me to deny thy Name;"
Nor vainly sought that grace, that to the end,
Faithful and bold, the truth he might defend;
But in yon courts,* by Heaven's supporting aid,
Before the Priests in lordly pride arrayed,
Witnessed a good confession, and then hailed
The king of terrors, nor before him quailed;
But yielded up his breath, in joyful trust
That, even as earth to earth and dust to dust,
So would his spirit go to Him who gave—
To Him who cleansed it—Him who died to save.

And, turning from that scene once more 'twould raise
Thoughts wherein sadness mixed with grateful praise
Unto the Comforter, on her to look †
Who from her breast her wailing infant took,
And gave it to His care who said, "To me
Your orphan children leave, and I will be
Their shield and stay;" then joyful sought her grave
In the dark bosom of the whelming wave,
Cheered by the hope wherewith she comforted
Her loved one, when to death, he, too, was led;
"Dearest," she said, "together we have passed
Full many a joyful day, but this our last

* Holyrood, where Straiton was tried and condemned.

† Robert Lamb and his wife suffered martyrdom on the same day, the former being hanged, and the latter drowned.

Most joyful of them all to me appears;
For now our God shall wipe away our tears;
And we shall seek yon glorious land of light
And joy unfailing; therefore, no good night
Will I now bid thee; ere this day be o'er
We'll meet to dwell in bliss for evermore."

But turn we now to where, aroused to wrath
By these bold rebels who had crossed her path,
That cursed one whom Inspiration paints
In scarlet clothed, and drunk with blood of saints,
Collects her force for one great effort more
Her failing, tottering empire to restore,
And while her rage assails Jehovah's throne,
Brings down His wrathful vengeance on her own.

High in a windowed niche of yonder tower,
Amid the associates of his guilt and power,
Behold, in sacerdotal pomp arrayed,
And stretched in cushion'd ease, proud Beaton laid,*
Yet not in careless mood, at random bent,
Wander his haughty eyes; but, fixed intent,
They gaze below, where some unwonted cause,
From far and near a wondering circle draws.
Well in the working features of his face
The inward gratulation you may trace,
And ask, what scene so worthy to excite
In that high priest of God such deep delight!

* "The fore-tower" of the castle of St. Andrews, "which was immediately opposite the fire, was hung with tapestry, and rich cushions were laid in the windows for the ease of the Cardinal and his prelates, while they beheld the spectacle" of Wishart's Martyrdom.—See SCOTS WORTHIES.

Say, hast thou e'er with wandering fancy strayed
Amid some Indian forest's ancient shade,
And looked astonished where the lurid blaze
Of burning faggots drew thy wondering gaze;
And, as thou stood'st in silent horror there,
Marked the wild forms that gleamed amid the glare,—
The worshippers of vengeance gathered round,
And 'mid the fire, the unshrinking victim bound?
Perhaps thine awe-struck soul has trembled then,
And asked, are these indeed my fellow-men?
So strange it seemed, that even the lawless sway
Of tyrant passions, from life's earliest day,
Could in the soul such frantic zeal create,
Though urged by deep, hereditary hate.
And as thy wondering eyes were turned to him
Whom the fierce fire consumed, limb after limb,
In fancy thou hast traced the wild career
Which, in that soul, had drowned the voice of fear;
The train of hardships which, since childhood's hour
Had fostered there that proud, unbending power;
The course of perils past, of pains endured,
By which to suffering he had been enured.
But here, behold a man of peace, a man
Whose youthful years in gentle tenor ran;
The sweets of calm and studious ease had known,
And 'neath each gentle influence had grown.
See him led out unflinching,—bold, yet meek;
Unbowed in spirit, though in body weak;
Looking on torture with a calmer eye,
And with serener joy prepared to die,
Than that proud savage, who, from boyhood's years,
Had aim'd to crush his feelings and his fears.

And what the power within that can sustain
His spirit in the time of death and pain?
Is it the haughty daring of his soul
That scorns to yield itself to man's control,
To own itself o'ercome, unmanned, or weak,
And yield his foes the triumph that they seek?
No, not of earth the glorious hope is born
That gives *his* soul the power of man to scorn.
From heaven the comfort and the strength descend
That 'gainst the darts of fear his breast defend.
Already do his eyes by faith behold
The glories of his Father's house unfold.
Of all the toils, the dangers, and the woes,
Of life's long road he sees the blessed close.
His weary pilgrimage is o'er at length,
Oh! this it is that gives his spirit strength!
For as a traveller o'er a rugged way,
Benighted, storm-beat, yet not led astray,
When now at length his longed-for home is nigh,
And its sweet lattice-light attracts his eye,
Feels that soft ray, 'mid storm and gloom that peers,
Rouse all his strength and banish all his fears,
And treads with firmer, bolder step the path,
Careless of darkness, and the tempest's wrath;
Even so, the martyr of the blessed faith,
Constant through life, and undismayed in death,
When by the storms of time his soul is driven,
To shelter in its peaceful home in heaven,
And when, 'mid thickening storm and furious blast,
That glorious home appears in view at last,
Then to revive his soul with brightest hope,
He sees the gates of heaven already ope,—

Those gates which Jesus opens to receive
The blessed train who in his name believe;
When robes of brightness shall to them be given,
Who through affliction's path were brought to heaven.

Such were the hopes of glory that sustained
The hosts whose blood for Zion's King was drained.
Well might they glory!—ay! and thank the hand
That lighted or that bore the fiery brand,
Whose flame consumed their cottages of clay,
And sent their spirits free and glad away;—
That bade them leave their earthly house of dust,
To dwell within the mansions of the just.

And while themselves, from fleshly bonds relieved,
The glorious crown of martyrdom received,
Their country, too, from lethargy awoke,
The cords of tyrant superstition broke,
And cast them in the martyr's fire, to gall
No more its spirit with debasing thrall.

But yet, oh! Scotia, on thy sons, once more,
Did persecution all her vials pour:
Again for them her chalice did she fill
With draughts still deeper and more bitter still.
And they who their allegiance dared to own
To the Eternal King of heaven alone,
Walked in the path their Master trod before,
And after Him the cross of suffering bore;—
Gladly they bore it, and with cheerful mind
Into the Almighty's hand their lot resigned:—
Gladly—for well they knew His watchful eye
Looked down in love and mercy from on high;
That he who dwelt in human form below,
And fathomed all the depths of human woe,—

He who came down from heaven their sins to bear,
Could still in all their earthly sufferings share.
Reviled, afflicted, tortured, robbed and banned,
Denied the aid of every mortal hand,
The more to heaven they looked—the closer clung
To the unfading joys from heaven that sprung.

Oh! tyrant Bigots, impotent as blind,
What! thought ye thus to bow th' immortal mind?
And deemed ye that when earthly hopes decay,
When time's illusive pleasures fleet away,
When human strongholds crumble in the dust,—
That with them totters the believer's trust?
No! 'mid the rending of all earthly ties,
His soul but struggles more to reach the skies;
And stronger still become the bonds of love
That bind his spirit to its home above.
'Tis when the founts of earthly joy are dried,
When in the breast the voice of mirth has died,—
'Tis then, to fill the vast and aching void—
The place of joys decayed—of hopes destroyed—
Most copious flow the streams of bliss that rise
Beside the Eternal's throne amid the skies.

The heart grows sick as the dark page we trace,
Black with the deeds of Stuart's perjured race,
Again too fondly trusted and restored
In evil hour, full long to be deplored.
The generous breast with indignation burns,
And from the scene the soul with loathing turns,
When through the floodgates thus unlocked we see
The turbid waters rush tumultuously
O'er all the land;—here whelming with wide sweep
Old Scotia's towers of strength;—there, dark and deep

Sapping the walls whose weak foundation stands,
By Folly built, on the unstable sands.

Woe to thee, Scotia, now! thy faithless sons
Have drunk of that Lethean stream that runs
Soft flowing from the dark, polluted spring
Of that lewd court which hails a treacherous king;
And, drinking there, have learned to cast away
The purer feelings of their earlier day.

Ah! these are they, whose hearts, still hard within,
And seared by the deceitfulness of sin,
Stand like the rock, which, barren still and cold,
Shows on its rugged surface a thin mould
Of scant, deceitful soil, wherein a while
The Word's good seed sprang up, and, 'neath the smile
Of favouring skies—amid the balmy air
Of the soft Spring, rejoiced and flourished fair;
But when the sun arose with burning heat,
And when his torrid beams began to beat
On these fair-seeming plants, with scorching ray,
They drooped and withered,—for no root had they.
And now, beneath the hot and brazen sky,
Like seared and rotting branches, lo! they lie,
Cumbering the ground. Such to the eye of Faith
They seem; and she, in pity more than wrath,
Weeps o'er their fall, who, cold, and dark, and dead,
"To every good work reprobate," are led
Captive by that foul spirit who, awhile,
Driven from their bosoms, had with fiendish guile
Departed—but ere long to come again
In sevenfold strength, that he at last might reign
And revel with unchecked and proud control
Among the garnished chambers of the soul.

No marvel that such hearts can ill endure
The hated sight of one too good and pure
To breathe with them the same polluted air,—
The same unhallowed revelry to share.
No marvel if, when recreant lips like these
Give the black mandate forth to bind and seize
The noblest, purest patriot of the land;*
And, when we see him now before them stand
And plead his sacred cause, like him of old,†
With all the power of truth,—serene yet bold,
Soon from these lips we hear the cry burst forth—
"Away with such a fellow from the earth—
He is not fit to live!" Ah! yes, too true
The words that stung, conviction from thee drew,
Sainted Argyll, when he on whose young head
The kingly crown by thy pure hands was laid,
Sent thee to sit upon a brighter throne,
And wear "a crown far better than his own;"
Too true thy words, that "men must now prepare
The extremes of suffering or of sin to share."

Nor long till other victims, at the shrine
Of Moloch slain, approve these words of thine.
Thither we see the gentle Guthrie brought,—
He of the breast with faith and fervour fraught;
With heart all meekness, and with soul all zeal,
Still strong to suffer, though still soft to feel.
See where, serene, he stands, prepared to die!
Hark from his lips the glad, triumphant cry—
"Oh! not though crowned or mitred I might live;
For all that pomp, this scaffold would I give!

* The Marquis of Argyll. See Note (2).
† Paul. See Acts xxii. 22.

The Covenants! Yet, my country, shalt thou see
The day when these shall thy reviving be."

The sinking sun o'er Scotia's mountains cast
Those mellowed beams—its loveliest and its last—
By whose mild influence in the pensive breast,
Distracting cares are sweetly lulled to rest,—
From whose bright hues a heavenly tint is caught
By the deep stream of gently flowing thought;
And even the bitter floods of Earth-born woe
Will lose their gloom while in that light they flow:
It was at such an hour—so sweetly still,
When poured that soft light o'er the distant hill,
A gentle youth, to whom that pensive hour
Was dear and welcome for its soothing power,
Had wandered forth and sought a neighbouring field,
Where to its peaceful sway his heart might yield—
Where undistracted, his o'erburdened mind
A fitting scene for solemn thought might find.
For boding clouds were brooding o'er the land,
Which deep and anxious cares might well demand,
And he beheld with calm but serious eye,
A time of trial and of gloom drew nigh.

While he yet mused, his father's step drew near—
The godly man, to all around him dear;
The watchful pastor 'neath whose constant care
A peaceful flock rejoiced and pastured there.

No slothful shepherd—no base hireling he,
Prepared before the coming wolf to flee,
And leave his flock o'er pathless wilds to stray,
To the destroyer's fangs a helpless prey.
His only care was to be faithful here,
That when the great "Chief Shepherd" should appear,

He might receive from Him, on that great day,
"A glorious crown, that fadeth not away."

There was unwonted sadness in his face,
Which filial love could scarcely fail to trace;
And when the voice of his kind greeting fell
On the youth's pensive ear, it seemed to tell,
Even in the mild affection of its tone,
Of feelings deep and mournful than his own.
"Father," he said, "thy soul is sad to-night,
If I can read thy thoughtful looks aright.
Shines not the light of Faith and Hope divine
Upon thy soul, as it is wont to shine?
Or does some dark, foreboding fear impart
That shade of sorrow to thy anxious heart?

"My son," the pastor said, "it is not now
The fear of unknown woes that clouds my brow:
The storm that brooded o'er our heads has burst;—
God grant that now, at last, we know the worst!
The sifting hour has come, when we must choose
Which of the two we shall consent to lose—
The home around whose hearth our dear ones re[illegible]
Or the clear conscience and the tranquil breast.
These hands we oft have lifted up in prayer
Unto the King of kings, must sign and swear
Allegiance to another—we must fall
Prostrate, 'tis said, what time we hear the call
Of 'sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and flute;'
And we must do our worship at the foot
Of this great golden image—we must own
A vaunting mortal on an earthly throne
Our Church's King and Head; else fast the hour
Approaches, when, by the rude hand of power

Cast forth as felons, we must learn to bear,
Resigned, the loss of all things, and to share
His lot who, when on Earth he deigned to tread,
Was poor, and had not where to lay his head.
And shall we stand in doubt? or shall we shrink
From that deep cup our Father bids us drink?
Ah! no; our onward path is clear, my son;
'T is God commands us, and His will be done!

"O blessed Saviour—thou whose life below
Was one long scene of trouble and of woe,—
Captain of our Salvation, who wast made
Perfect by those great sufferings on thee laid,—
Thou who for us didst bow thy holy head
On the accursed tree,—Thou who wast led
A willing victim to the altar,—Thou
Who, far above all heavens exalted now,
Rulest o'er all things for thy Church, supreme
In might and wisdom; if to thee it seem
For thine own glory and the eternal good
Of those whom thou hast bought with thine own blood,
To call thy people in this land of ours
To mortal combat with the leagued powers
Of Earth and Hell—to testify for thee
Amid the fires, O grant that we may see
And feel that thou art with us, that whate'er
Thy will may be, we may have strength to bear
The heating of the furnace—to hold fast,
Unmoved, our high profession to the last.
Work in our hearts that faith, serene and pure,
Which nerved, of old, thy martyrs to endure
All fierce and fiery deaths, and spurn away
Deliverance that would lure them to betray

Thy high and holy cause. Stand by us, Lord,
And comfort us according to thy word."

So prayed the venerable man, his eyes
Turned with deep, earnest meaning to the skies,
And bright'ning, as he spake, with light that flowed
From the calm joy that in his bosom glowed.
Then, turning to the youth, who, listening there,
Had breathed a deep amen to all his prayer,
"My son," he said, "methinks, even now, I feel
That not in vain to Heaven our hearts appeal;—
I feel how true and faithful is the word,
That they who wait in faith upon the Lord
Shall mount on eagle's wings, with strength renewed,
And, with immortal energy imbued,
Shall run and not be weary—shall hold on
Their course, rejoicing, till the goal is won.
My heart is fixed and fearless, for my trust
Is in the mighty God, who from the dust
Can raise the afflicted. His abundant grace
Shall be sufficient for us, while we trace
His hand in all things. He with inward strength
Shall strengthen us. Oh! yes, whate'er the length—
Whate'er the darkness of the cloudy day,
He shall sustain us till it pass away.

"Yet while we know that He will ne'er forsake
The heart that trusteth in Him, but will make
All things to work together for the weal
Of those who love Him, still our hearts may feel
Unblamed by Him who all our frailty knows,
The pangs of grief—the weight of mortal woes.

He bids us not in stern and Stoic pride
The afflictions of this present time abide;
But He would have our spirits feel and know
How bitterly the streams of Marah flow,
That with more humble joy our hearts may own
That Branch's healing power which He hath thrown
Into the waters, and, deep drinking there,
Gain strength, the toils of the long way to bear.

"I feel that, if the Father's will be so,
Into the wilderness I now could go,
Confiding in His kind and constant care,
And trusting that His voice would cheer me there.
But, oh! 'tis bitter to the soul to think
That those we love of the same cup must drink;—
That those dear ones whose tender hearts have known
The sweets of home and its calm bliss alone,
Must face the blasts which o'er our country blow—
And who may tell to what that storm may grow?
Yet let us humbly trust that He who feeds
The ravens when they cry,—who gently leads
The nursing ewes, and in his bosom bears
The young and tender lambs, and who prepares
Convenient food for all, whate'er may be
Their want or weakness—let us trust that He
Will be our Shepherd—then we shall not fear
What man can do to us, while He is near.

"For thee, my son, I know thou art prepared
For whatsoe'er awaits thee;—thou hast shared
My cares and toils, and I have loved to trace
In thy young heart the strengthening power of grace.

Together we have passed the peaceful days
When calm, sweet sunshine lightened all our ways;
And yet awhile together we shall tread
The rugged path with transient gloom o'erspread.
We have been helpers of each other's joy;
Grief shall but bind us closer still, my boy;
Or, if our path on Earth should lie apart
Yet, bound together in one mind, one heart,
We still shall be united—still shall know
The sweets of fellowship; our thoughts shall flow
In the same peaceful course, and we shall meet
In spirit still before the Mercy seat.

"O God! shall this insensate heart of mine
Against thy chastening dealings e'er repine,
When thou hast made my cup run o'er with bliss,
And crowned thy wond'rous goodness all in this—
That thou hast heard my strong and constant prayer,
And taken to thine own Almighty care
Those tender ones whose souls are dearer far
To me than life and all its comforts are!

"Now lettest thou thy servant part in peace;
Gladly I wait the hour of my release,
Rejoicing in the hope thy Son hath given,
That, in the bright abodes prepared in Heaven
For those who love thee, we shall meet again,
And evermore, with Christ, together reign."

Such were the mingled feelings that possessed
Full many a faithful pastor's anxious breast,—
Such the deep resignation to the will
Of Him who guards His people from all ill,—

Such the undaunted boldness to maintain
The cause of Him whose right it is to reign—
Which nerved the suffering followers of the Lamb,
And kept their spirits fearless, still, and calm;
When the dark conclave* gave the mandate forth
That drove that flock as wanderers o'er the Earth.

And 'neath the ethereal vault of Nature's fane
They worshipped the Creator, not in vain.
Not vainly there 'twas given them to behold
The wonders of His power and skill unrolled.
To them in every breeze the Almighty spoke,
And all they saw or heard deep feelings woke.

The lonely wanderer, as he raised his eye
In awful musing to the midnight sky,
And watched the stars which there harmonious roll,
Obedient to his Father's high control,
Could he repine against the narrow sway
To man accorded in his little day?
No, well he knew that, though with dubious gleam
Upon his sight the plans of Heaven might beam,—
Dim, because distant far, and far too high
For man to trace with Reason's straining eye,—

* The Council issued a proclamation, on the 4th of October, 1662, banishing from their manses and parishes all those Ministers who had been admitted since 1649, when patronage was abolished, unless they obtained a presentation from the lawful patron, and collation from the Bishop of the Diocese, before the 1st of November. Nearly four hundred Ministers chose to be ejected, rather than comply with these conditions. These were much encouraged, and, as far as possible, adhered to, by their people.

Yet, as these orbs their mazy paths pursue,
To their Creator's purpose ever true,
So do those wondrous ways of God, which man
All vainly strives with erring eye to scan,
Still tend, though oft mysterious, to fulfil
His gracious covenant—His most holy will;
To tell the glory of the Almighty One—
The praise of Him who speaks and it is done;—
The endless weal to work and to defend
Of those who love and serve Him to the end.

In yon drear solitude, where erst was heard
Nought but the shrill note of the mountain bird,
Slow breathed, a strain of holy fervour thrills,
And dies away on the surrounding hills,
Which seem to list attentive to a tone
Deep, solemn, and sublime, as is their own:
For, by the tyrant suffered now no more
In fanes by man erected to adore,
In wilds like these alone the flock may meet,
To join in worship and in commune sweet.

'Twas earliest morn, when in this vale they met;
The place was fixed when last the sun had set:
And ere again above the hills he rose,
They left their secret places of repose.
Joyful, o'er moor and hill they took their way,
Ere yet he shot direct one gladdening ray:
Yet did a soft and pensive light pervade
The silent air commingling with the shade:
For he a placid radiance sent before,
And Nature's face a tranquil aspect wore.

A holy beauty, gentle and serene,—
A chastened gladness, spread o'er all the scene.
The clouds that sweet and peaceful influence felt;
Their stern and gloomy bosoms seemed to melt;
They lost their wrathful aspect, dark and wild;
A tranquil joy spread o'er them, and they smiled.
The worshippers that scene rejoicing viewed;
To Fancy's eye it seemed a sign for good;
For thus, they thought, the wrathful clouds that spread,
Hanging with threatening aspect o'er their head,
Might well be robbed of all their saddening gloom,
Lit by the hope of glories yet to come:
And that prophetic light whose beams revealed
To Faith the eternal world, from sense concealed,
This passing scene of suffering well might cheer,
Gladdening with rays of hope their wanderings here.

But now the joyous sun has mounted high,
And sheds his genial influence from the sky:
And as we look on that adoring throng,
And list the accents of their sacred song.
Well may we deem that every bosom glows
In light that from a Sun far brighter flows.
In various tones that holy strain is sung;
And variously these hearts hath Nature strung:
Yet, sweetly tuned by influence divine,
In loveliest harmony they all combine.

Old men, with furrowed brows and silvery hair,
The reverend fathers of the flock, are there:
Pure-hearted men, who from their youth had known
The Scriptures,—and had made them all their own;—

Had hid the law of God within their heart,
That from His ways they never might depart.
And thus into the wilderness they bore
Within themselves a never-failing store—
A copious feast, whereon even there to feed,
To cheer and strengthen in the hour of need;—
A well of living water, whence they found
Refreshment, and could give to all around.

And creatures innocent and young and fair,
With artless minds and cheerful hearts, are there;
Blest beings, early taught to raise their eyes
In love and meek devotion to the skies;—
To see the glory of their God displayed
In the bright hosts wide o'er the heavens arrayed;—
To bow, in simple, trusting faith, the knee
To Him whom mortal eye might never see,
But whom they worshipped with a filial awe
As the great, secret source of all they saw.
Yes, here is many a young and buoyant breast
With holy feeling and deep thought impressed;
And in such simple babes the Lord ordains
The strength to be shown forth wherewith He reigns;—
Even by their mouths to silence and confound
The foes and powers of darkness gathering round.

And, in the midst of that adoring band,
Behold the venerable pastor stand.
By the mild accents from his lips that flow,
And by his calmly beaming eye, we know
That he is one whose listening heart hath heard,
And glad obeys the charge of his great Lord.

"O comfort ye my people, comfort them ;
Speak comfortably to Jerusalem."
Full well he knows the glorious theme that best
Can bring repose unto the weary breast.
And ere the consecrated bread he breaks
That brings the Saviour's death to mind, or takes
The cup that figures forth the precious blood,
That on the hallowed mount for sinners flowed,
He pours his burning soul in one rapt strain
Of praise unto the Lamb that once was slain ;
And speaks of all the unutterable love
Of Him who left His glorious throne above,
To take our nature and our sins to bear,
That we, with Him, eternal bliss might share.

And in the shelter of this peaceful glen,
Far from the world and from the haunts of men,
Shall they not worship undistracted here ?
Shall not their breasts be void of earthly fear ?
Shall aught intrude their holy joys to mar,
Or with their sacred harmony to jar ?
Shall aught unhallowed enter to deface
The placid beauty of this holy place ?

Yes, there are hearts, unknowing how to melt,
Who ne'er the beauty of holiness have felt,
Who could rejoice with fierce and fiendish joy
These peaceful tents of Israel to destroy ;
With sacrilegious fury in to rush,
And these assembled worshippers to crush,—
To dash their altars broken to the ground,
And strew the sacred things defiled around.

The foes of Zion have unsheathed the sword
Against the faithful followers of the Lord;
Like the wild whirlwind is their dread career,
And Desolation spreads where they appear.
Yet fear not, little flock! though tempests lower,
Fear not the passing storms of human power;
Though murky vapours from the earth arise,
And strive to hide the pure and placid skies,
Drive from your breasts the darkening clouds of fear!
Though all is dark without, let all within be clear!
Say, shall not He who curbs the raging main,
The power and passions of your foes restrain?
Yes, the dark floods of Persecution's tide
Awhile may swell and roar in threatening pride,
But, from the voice of Him who rules the sea,
Already has gone forth the fixed decree,
"Come thou thus far, but here resign thy power;
Fixed are thy bounds, and fixed thy ebbing hour."
The time shall come, when, at His dread command,
Driven back and motionless these waves shall stand,
Fixed as the waters of that mighty flood
Which erst around his chosen people stood
When o'er their face the prophet stretched his rod,
And bade them sever in the name of God;—
Fixed as the sea of hills that round you rise,
That shade the Earth, and seem to pierce the skies;—
Fixed by that hand, whose power unseen sustains
These rocks that hang, dark frowning o'er the plains.

Where fades the wintry evening, grey and chill,
And gleams the last faint sunbeam on the hill,*

* The Pentlands.

What band comes trooping, wayworn, faint, and slow
Here fain to rest them 'mid the drifted snow?
Mark we their wan and wearied looks aright,
Or do the twilight shades deceive our sight?
Ah! no, not yet those features are forgot
That beamed so peaceful on yon hallowed spot
Where late we saw the faithful, gathering round,
And meekly listening to the joyful sound.

'Tis true they wear a different aspect here—
A look of stern resolve—yet not of fear;—
The look of men to firm resistance driven,
To guard the sacred rights they hold from Heaven.
Yet may we read in every feature there
The same calm trust in Heaven's protecting care;—
The same pure conscience where offence is none
By God imputed, or to mankind done;
For not in anarch vengeance, proud and wild,
To arms have they appealed—these men reviled;
Not for some fancied wrong do they defy
The powers ordained of Him who reigns on high;
No—let the groaning of a land oppressed,
The sacred justice of their cause attest.
And ye who brand it with rebellion's name,
Blush—if your souls are not too seared for shame.
If in your breast a freeman's heart you bear—
Blush, while the fruits of Freedom's tree you share,
Blush, if your minds are not too warped to own
By such rebellion that fair tree was sown.

Vain for themselves—nay, more than vain, 'tis true,
The desperate struggle of that dauntless few.
For see! the foe hath come, with whelming force,
And soon the hills lies strewn with many a corse;

And many a captive, borne in triumph back,
Cast to the dungeon,—tortured on the rack,—
Like meanest felon to the scaffold borne,—
Unflinching bears a weight of woe and scorn.
Yet for their country deem it not in vain
That these bright martyrs for the truth are slain.
See where yon weeping crowd are gathered round,
Intent to catch the sad, yet precious sound
Of that dear voice, which must be heard no more
When this short hour of suffering shall be o'er,—
The voice of him* whose brief and bright career
Is closed—in gloom?—ah! no, in glory, here.
Torture hath failed that gentle soul to bow,
And over death he comes to triumph now.
Yea, list the accents from his lips that flow—
Words of unfaltering joy in midst of woe:
"Weep not," he says, "weep not, dear friends, for me,
Joyful can I ascend this gallows tree,
Even as if every step I upward clomb
But bore me nearer to my Father's home.
This is my comfort,—what the Scripture saith
Of him who, poor in life, was blest in death,—
That angels, then, all mortal sufferings o'er,
His ransomed soul to Abraham's bosom bore.
And, even as now a solemn scene appears,
Here, death's dread ensigns—there, a crowd in tears;
Even so is solemn preparation made,—
Angels unseen around me are arrayed,
Waiting to bear my trusting soul to rest
For evermore in my Redeemer's breast.
Farewell, all ye whose sweet and constant smile
Has cheered my course on Earth,—farewell awhile:

* Hugh M'Kail.

Farewell, ye lovely scenes, to my fond eye
Endeared by many a strong and holy tie:
Farewell, thou sun, whose rays to me have seemed
Like a full flood of gladness as they beamed
Now welcome God and Father: welcome thou,
Who, suffering once, in glory reignest now:
Welcome thou blessed Spirit of all grace:
Welcome the glory of Jehovah's face:
Welcome eternal life through Jesus given:
And welcome death, to me the gate of heaven."

And now let all your blood-hounds loose, ye men
Of Belial, let them scour each plain and glen,
And drag from out the caves wherein they lie
The hunted wanderers;—go, and feast your eye
Upon their torments;—let the fields be strewn
With blood of guiltless men, and let the groan
Of maids and mothers, as your steps draw near
To their retreat, make music in your ear.
Go, dastard Graham, collect thy scattered host,
All burning to retrieve the glory lost
On yon bleak moor,* whence now confused they fly
Before that band, once slighted in thine eye:
Go, let the waters of yon stream run red†
With gore from weltering heaps around them spread.
And, when that butcher-work must have an end,
In yon drear churchyard let the rest be penned
Like sheep reserved for slaughter, to await
‡A heavier yet,—a more appalling fate.

* Drumclog.

† At Bothwell Bridge.

‡ Multitudes were banished, and many perished by shipwreck in the way, while the rest were doomed to languish in slavery, exposed to hardships which soon brought numbers to the grave

Yet shall that people, scattered thus and peeled,
But still untaught to tyrant power to yield,
Yet shall they flourish, 'neath the smile of Heaven,
Howe'er by ruthless tempests tossed and riven ;—
Yet shall they but the more increase, and shoot
Their branches forth from an undying root,
Even as the teil tree, or the sturdy oak,*
Which still survives the devastating stroke
Of wintry storms, and, though it cast its leaves,
Ere long its faded glory all retrieves.

But yet awhile must the rude blast assail
That tree, and its torn leaves must strew the vale.
Dark clouds must o'er the country brood awhile,
Though still the bow of promise there shall smile.

It is the peaceful hour when gently fall
Those mellowed beams that softly seem to call
The holy soul to pour its trusting prayer
To Him who bids us cast on Heaven our care.
And now, while from the tints of dewy eve
A shadowy grandeur all the hills receive,—
While to Imagination's musing eye
Earth seems to mingle with the meeting sky,
And to the awe-struck gaze of guilty fear
A thousand dark and ghastly shapes appear,—
With sweet and soothing influence the thought
To the believer's grateful heart is brought
Of Him, who oft was wont, at close of day,
To seek a mountain solitude to pray ;—
Of Him whose spotless soul such anguish bore,
The smile of Heaven to sinners to restore,

* Isaiah vi. 13

That, as beneath the midnight's chilly shade,
In lonely agony He knelt and prayed:
Upon His holy brow great drops of blood,
Wrung by his soul's sore travail, trembling stood.

In many an humble cot is rising now
The voice of praise, the deep and fervent vow;
And many a hoary head 'neath these calm skies
A sanctuary seeks which man denies.
Thus yon wild spot, with furze and broom o'ergrown,
The voice of prayer and praise full oft hath known.
And there is one whose sweetest hours are pass'd*
'Mid the rude shelter there around him cast.
Even now, safe guarded in that loved retreat,
His soul rejoices with his God to meet.
The evening shades are gathering fast around,
But still he will not quit the hallowed ground,
For there from heaven he feels an influence flow
That bids the fire within more brightly glow.
Yet while he prays for heaven's protecting power
To shield his dear ones in the evil hour,
O'er his calm spirit comes a thought of her
Whose gentle heart strange, boding fears will stir,
If still he linger. Therefore doth he pour
But one deep strain of fervent feeling more;
Then from the ground he rises; but still bears
With him the unction that perfumed his prayers—
The unction of the Holy One, the blood
Of sprinkling whereby, purged in heart, he stood
Before the throne, and, sweetly reconciled,
Cried, Abba, Father, like a pardoned child.

* The foundation of the following narrative is to be found in Simpson's Traditions of the Covenanters, Second Series, p. 280.

With this deep feeling in his breast he moves
Toward the sheltering home of her he loves.
Deep is the peace that o'er his bosom flows,
And calmly thus he muses as he goes,
"The Lord's my Shepherd, surely I shall want
For no good thing Omnipotence can grant:
He leads me by the waters still and pure,
And in green pastures bids me rest secure;
Yea, though I walk through Death's sepulchral vale,
Joyful the King of Terrors will I hail;
For there shalt thou be with me, O my God,
Cheer with thy staff, and guide me with thy rod.
And what though thorns obstruct, and gloom o'erspread
The rugged path by which my soul is led;
Yet safely shalt thou bring me to that shore
Where storm and darkness shall be known no more;
And there with Christ shall I for ever be,
Reaping the bliss His blood hath bought for me."

Soothed by such blissful thought, his steps draw near
To his dear home, by absence made more dear.
Softly he enters, and more softly yet
He treads the floor, when his glad eyes have met
His well beloved, where, rapt in prayer, she kneels:
And, while he marks her earnest mien, he feels
That to her soul some token hath been given,
Brighter than wont, of a protecting Heaven.
But, gladly conscious now that *he* stood by
For whom her thanks were poured, she lifts her eye,
Beaming with joy to Heaven; and, rising, flings
Her arms around his neck, and fondly clings
To his loved bosom, while her feelings thus
Break forth in voice half choked and tremulous:—

"Praise to our gracious God, whose guardian care
Hath freed thee, dearest, from the fowler's snare.
Scarce hadst thou gone, when we could hear the tread
Our hearts too well have learned to know and dread.
A moment more, and 'twas the horrid sound
Of armed invaders ranging all around.
They sought, and when they found thee not, they left
The house like wolves that, of their prey bereft,
Skulk howling through the forest. As they went
In hideous oaths they gave their anger vent,
And vowed a double vengeance whensoe'er
Thou should'st be taken in a surer snare.
Yet not the less was I constrained to pour
My soul in praise to Him, who thus, once more,
Hid thee beneath the shadow of His wings:
And I took up the strain of him who sings,
'Though war rise up against me, though an host
Encamp against me with triumphant boast,
I shall not fear, for in the evil day
Th' Almighty God himself shall be my stay
He His pavilion shall my refuge make,
And set me on a rock no power shall shake.'"

"Even so," he answered, "I already felt
When on the silent field alone I knelt;
Yes, praise be to our God, so calm and sweet,
To-night my converse was in my retreat,
With our Great Shepherd, that I felt indeed
He ne'er would leave me in the hour of need.
Oh! how that spot hath been to me endeared
By hours of holy joy! It hath appeared
At times to me the very gate of heaven,
When to my musing soul it hath been given

Almost to see Jehovah face to face;
And I have cried, 'How dreadful is this place!
Surely the Lord is here:' and such deep awe
Hath come upon me as he felt who saw
The Lord upon His throne of glory, 'high
And lifted up,' and was constrained to cry,
'Woe's me, I am undone, for I have seen
The Lord of hosts; a man of lips unclean,
Dwelling 'mong men of unclean lips, I've gazed
On Deity unveiled.' But, God be praised,
He left no shade of gloom upon my soul;
His Spirit touched my lips as with a coal
From off the altar, and I heard Him say,
Lo! this hath touched thy lips, and purged away
All thine iniquity. Heaven grant me now,
And evermore, the strength to keep the vow
I uttered then,—constrained by God's great love,—
That whensoe'er a voice, as from above,
Should speak to me, as to the Prophet, thus,
'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'
I should reply, 'Whate'er the work may be,
Whate'er its perils, here am I, send me.'"

And not in vain from Heaven that aid he sought,
His soul was strengthened by a faith which wrought,
By love—deep love to Him for man who bled;
And love to all for whom His blood was shed;
And though no more he now may dare to leave
His secret refuge 'mid the shades of eve,
The sweets of calm, domestic bliss to taste,—
That sweet refreshment in Life's dreary waste,—
Yet homeward oft his pensive steps will steal,
That with the meeting saints he there may kneel,

And pour with them the deep and trusting prayer,
And feed the flock with food that may prepare
Their faint and failing spirits to endure
The raging of the foe,—that, keeping pure
Their garments from the world, they may be found
Still faithful 'mid the snares that spread around.

Nor shrinks he, where his Master calls, to go,
Despite the threat'nings of the watchful foe.
Still with his Lord is he prepared to say—
"I work my Father's work while it is day,
Even now the night, when none can work, is near,
And then before the Judge I must appear."

In yonder humble cot he kneeleth now
Beside that aged saint, whose pallid brow
The dews of Death are moistening, and whose eye
Looks through the gloom that shrouds his evening sky
To the bright dawning of that endless day,
Lit by His smile whose hand shall wipe away
The tears from every eye. Attuned so well
Are those two hearts in unison to swell,
The same deep strain of trusting prayer, that while
The pastor pours his own heart forth, the smile
Of holy joy, the beams of hope and faith
That light those eyes, half dimmed by shades of death
Tell that that heart which, ere an hour be flown,
Shall reap the joys 'mid earthly sufferings sown,—
That heart even now almost attuned to bear
A part in Heaven's high anthems, and to share
The bliss of angels, feels the peaceful tone
That marks that prayer, harmonious with his own,
Even as if he who breathed it deeply felt
That he, too, on the rugged border dwelt

Of the Dark Valley, through whose depths of gloom
He soon must pass, and looked upon the tomb
As a calm resting-place, where he would leave
His weak and worn-out frame till it retrieve
More than its honours lost, and rise again
In glory—far beyond the reach of pain.

But hark! a harsh sound breaks upon their ear,
Which speaks too surely the rude spoiler near.
"Father, the hour is come—Thy will be done,
I've kept the faith, and now my course is run;
Henceforth for me—for all who love the Lord,
There is laid up a crown,"—that joyful word
Scarce have these pale lips uttered, when a band
Of armed men rush in and round them stand.
They see the Pastor kneeling—'t is enough
To mark their prey, and ruthless hands and rough
Are on him,—he is bound—and while the last
Deep fervent blessing on his head hath passed
From the old man's lips, ere tremblingly they yield
Their latest sigh, and in cold death are sealed,
He, like some felon, outlawed and decreed
To death, or taken in some desperate deed,
And from his secret haunt by Justice torn,
Away by that remorseless band is borne.
And whither? to the Judgment-hall? ah! no,
It needs not even the form—the outward show
Of justice, ere the sentence pass on one
Who dares to bow before another throne
Than Cæsar's. Why should they be moved to spare
A traitor—taken in the act of prayer?

The moon shines sweetly down, with tranquil beam,
On the glad waters of yon rushing stream,

That pours its peaceful current with still sound
Where, steeped in moonshine, wave the woods around.
It is a scene that well might charm away
All dark and evil thoughts from those who stray
Mid its calm beauties. Surely while the eye
Of Heaven seems looking down thus lovingly
Upon this dark, rebellious world, and while
The face of Nature wears this placid smile,
And all is peace around—ah! surely now
Man cannot look with dark and scowling brow
Upon his brother! Surely 't were a scene
Where pardoning words might fitly pass between
Foes sweetly reconciled! To these calm skies
Meetly might sinful man lift up his eyes,
And with meek, contrite spirit seek from Heaven
Grace to forgive as he had been forgiven!
And is it but in Fancy's pensive ear
That such a prayer even now is rising here?
Is that soft sound that comes upon the breeze
But the cold night-wind's whisper 'mid the trees?
No, 'mid the shady forest, clear and calm,
Rises from many a voice the plaintive psalm.

But, all at once, these strains have ceased to flow,
And now there is a hurrying to and fro
Of trembling maids, who, as if bid to fly
From coming foes, still turn their anxious eye
Backward, in fear and deep solicitude,
To where the clang of arms amid the wood
Tells that their faithful guardians, hand to hand,
Though in unequal contest, still withstand
Th' assailing foe, that they the while may seek
A place of safety. So, with dauntless beak,

Will the bold bird defend his peaceful nest,
And to the spoiler yield his bleeding breast,
Intent alone the foe's pursuit to stay
Till high in air his mate hath soared away.

That struggle o'er, the persecuting band
Move on till now by this deep stream they stand.
But who is he, who, bleeding, faint and worn,
Seems by these ruthless hands half dragged, half borne?
By his mild eye and silvery hair I know
The aged pastor who, a while ago,
In earnest prayer was kneeling by the bed
Of him whose soul from this dark scene hath fled.
Now, as he stands beside the river's brink,
He thinks, and sweet it is to him to think,
Of Jordan's waters, and the glorious shore
That lies beyond, and of the Priests who bore
Amid its severed waves the blessed Ark,
And made its tide, that rolled so deep and dark,
No longer dreadful to the God-led host,
Whose face was set to reach the further coast.
And with triumphant joy, unmixed with fear,
He feels that now the solemn hour is near,
When, having led through this dark wilderness
The flock of God, and cheered with hopes of bliss
Their drooping hearts, himself must lead them through
The swelling Jordan, holding up to view
The ark, whose presence in the darkest hour
Can rob even Death of his appalling power.

But on the river's brink they pause not long,
And, though the stream is rushing deep and strong,

Through its dark tide they hold their struggling way,
For fears, of conscience born, forbid delay.
"But why so long this cumb'rous burden bear?
What tongue shall question, or what heart shall care,
How, where, or wherefore he be doomed to die?
There—plunge him in the stream, and let him lie."
So speaks the leader of the band.—'Tis done,
And o'er the martyr's head the waters run.
The heedless soldiers hasten on their way;
And still the moon shines down with tranquil ray,
Like some bright witness stationed in the sky,
To mark the spot where faithful martyrs lie:
For precious in thy sight, O Saviour God,
Is thy saints' death, and hallowed is the sod,
Nor hallowed less the wave—the rushing stream,
Where rests the body thou shalt yet redeem
From its corruption. Surely they are blest
Who, dying in the Lord, thus calmly rest
From all their labours, while their works of love
Do follow them, and find reward above.

Again the solemn shades of eve descend,
And Scotia's children hail them as a friend;
Congenial with the pensive gloom that rests
Upon their sad, yet not despairing breasts.
These shades seem gathering o'er the quiet skies,
At once to shelter and to sympathise;
To shroud them from the view of watchful foes,
And gently to condole with Scotia's woes.
Now to the meeting-place they take their way
With spirits calm as the departing day,—
More deeply feeling, at this tranquil hour,
Their Heavenly Father's all-pervading power.

While not a jarring sound the silence breaks,
His voice of kindness more distinctly speaks,
And seems to say, " Oh let not doubt or fear
Disturb your souls, my sons, for I am here."

Amid the clouds that darkly rush athwart
The sky, and now commingle, now dispart,
The moon, at intervals, shoots wildly forth,
A paly ray upon the sorrowing earth.
To those, who, musing, catch her tranquil beams,
Like the faint lamp of Scotia's hope she seems,—
Now hid by dark and threatening clouds from sight,
Now shining forth with pure and heavenly light.

And hark! the thrilling notes of sacred song
From yon sequestered dell are borne along.
The rocks, the streamlets, dimly seen around,
And nature all seems gladdened by the sound.
The moon that, in meek lovelines arrayed,
Had hid her charms beneath a darkening shade,
When, for a moment lost in glad surprise,
She hears that joyful voice from Earth arise,
Withdraws awhile the silver-fringed veil
That hung before her face, so mildly pale,
And casts upon the throng adoring there
A look of anxious love and tender care.
O fatal glance, though, as it kindly beamed,
To them like heaven's approving smile it seemed!
O fatal glance of love, betraying those
It smiled on to their ever watchful foes;
For wolves, athirst for blood, and prowling round,
Had rushed, attracted by that rising sound.
Awhile with fruitless gaze, from yonder rock,
Amid the gloom their eyes had sought the flock.

But when, at last, the moon's unclouded ray,
Bright beaming from above, disclosed their prey,
Down from the heights, with eager haste they leap,
And slow and silent on their victims creep,
And steal unseen, till, with a sudden spring,
And savage shouts that bid the echoes ring,
To their devoted prey with horrid fangs they cling.

Minions of Tyranny! in this, the hour
Of your unbridled and relentless power,
Ply all your ingenuity accurst—
Let threat'nings and let tortures do their worst,
Then feel how impotent they are, to bend
The souls whose hopes on heaven alone depend.
Tax all the Elements to furnish forth
Your horrid work—fire, water, air, and earth!
Search the deep bowels of the Earth to find
Iron to slay—to torture and to bind!
Or cast your hunted victims forth, to bear
The tempest's wrath—the midnight's chilling air!
Bind them amid the surge where every wave
Heaves higher up their cold and dismal grave!
Or let the flame, fierce mounting from below,
Consume their flesh with torture keen and slow!
Your fiendish skill—your black invention strain,
To multiply the modes and grades of pain!—
Still, through a glorious power to you unknown,
Shall yet the more your impotence be shown.

In all th' insignia of his pride arrayed
Let the dread King of Terrors be displayed:—
Around him let a grim and ghastly troop
Of mingling Tortures form a horrid group;

Yet are they all assembled there in vain
'Gainst that unarmed, but still undaunted train.
Onward, with calm, unfaltering step they move,
Made more than conquerors through a Saviour's love.
With no vain confidence their hearts are bold,
For they are clad in armour proved of old:
The Shield of Faith is theirs, which, oft assailed,
In time of trial never yet hath failed;
The helmet of Salvation crowns their head,
And Righteousness defends their breasts from dread.

'T is winter on the hills, and, all around,
The snow lies deep on the untrodden ground;
The sheep are gathered from each mountain path,
Leaving the upland pastures to the wrath
Of the wild tempest. Rarely now is heard
The cheerful carol of the mountain bird,
That from its lowly nest was wont to rise,
And, soaring, pour its wild notes 'mid the skies.
If breaks one sound upon the wanderer's ear,
It is but such as makes the waste more drear;
The lonely plover's shrill and plaintive wail,
The mournful sighing of the Wintry gale.
O'er the bleak scene as wide we cast our eye,
No human dwelling may we here descry,
Save yon rude sheiling on the mountain's brow,
The Shepherd's summer lodge—deserted now—
Its rent walls opening to each wind that blows,
And half immersed beneath the drifted snows.
But—ah! what means this track of human feet
That thither leads? Can such a wild retreat
Give shelter to some lorn and friendless one,
Who, 'mid these desert regions, seeks to shun

The converse of his kind?—or, wandering lone
Over the trackless hills, 'mid scenes unknown,
Has some poor outcast here a refuge found,
While storms and wildering darkness closed around?
Let us draw near, nor pass unheeding by,
Regardless of the strong and holy tie
That binds in blessed union all who bear
The human frame, and human sorrows share,—
A tie wherewith we feel more closely bound
When dreary wastes like these spread wide around.

We reach the hut, nor stand we long before
The firmly closed, but rude and shattered door.
It seems as if our words of kindly tone
Touched, like a charm, the heart, which, sad and lone
Broods o'er its own deep thoughts in that retreat
So rude and wild; and—hark! his willing feet
Answer our gentle summons, and with voice
That seems in grateful gladness to rejoice
To own the holy brotherhood we claim,
He bids us welcome in the hallowed name
Of our great Master. 'Mid the twilight gloom
Of that rude hut's one cold and cheerless room,
We scan, with curious eye, the form and mien
Of that recluse; and, though but dimly seen,
His gentle aspect—the calm smile that beams
O'er his pale features,—the soft light that gleams
From his clear, pensive eyes, all seem to tell
Of deep, pure thoughts that in his spirit dwell.
Nor long has been our converse, till we find
That here is one, of deep and serious mind,
Who, by the Spirit taught from earliest years,
And shone upon by that pure light which cheers

Though all around be dark, has learned to give
Himself to God's high service, and to live
Not to himself, but unto him who died
And rose again—the scorned, the crucified.
Yes, it is one who counts all things but loss
For Christ, and who has taken up his cross,
And followed Him without the camp, and borne;
Unmurmuring, his reproach, counting the scorn
Endured for Christ as riches to be prized
Far above Egypt's wealth—'t is the despised,
The suffering, gentle Renwick ;—he whose voice
Full oft hath made the wilderness rejoice,
And nerved the faithful few to bear unmoved
The oppressor's fury, for His sake who loved
And died for them, that they, from sin set free,
Might live and reign with Him eternally

And yet awhile must that devoted band
Against the ruthless foe maintain their stand;
And he with whom we hold communion now
Unto the death his holy head must bow,
Ere from his throne yon perjured king be cast,
And God's afflicted Church find rest at last.

But well have all their sufferings been repaid,
By Him for whom their banner they displayed;
And now may Scotia, with exulting eye,
Behold that glorious banner floating high,
Waving its folds above our Zion's towers,
Which still shall stand, despite all mortal powers.

Nor hath their bright example been forgot;
Fresh is their memory still in every cot;
Their spirit and their influence linger still
On every peaceful vale and guardian hill.

He who perchance unwitting hath been led
Amid the scenes where they have lived or bled,
Will start and pause if he should hear their name,
While grateful feelings thrill through all his frame.
Some peasant there with honest pride will tell
That here the Martyrs of the Covenant fell;
With eager step and brightly beaming eye
Will lead him to the spot where low they lie,
And bid him mark the old memorial stone,
Kept sacred long from touch and moss-o'ergrown.
And there, as if awakened by a spell,
Flows forth the stream of Memory's copious well.
Recalling deeds of horror done of old,—
Dark tales his father's sire perchance had told,
Tales that with high resolve had fired his breast,
As in the appointed race he onward pressed.

Even as on this green height I roam along
And pour their praises in a simple song,
Where lie "Dun Edin's tower and town" below
And Ocean's distant waves in sunset glow,
How many a scene attracts my musing gaze
That brings to memory long departed days,—
That wakes remembrance of that blood-stained time
When fealty to Jehovah was a crime.

Drear is yon craggy isle* where not a sound
Now stirs the air save sea-birds shrieking round,—
Their harsh notes mingling with the dashing wave,
When Ocean's troubled waters fret and rave;
Yet there, full oft, was heard in bygone days,
The thrilling voice of glad, triumphant praise;

* The Bass.

Oft from his dark and noisome dungeon there
The patient martyr poured his heart in prayer.

Once did these sunny banks that stretch below*
In the fierce light of blazing faggots glow.
And while Imagination wings her flight
Beyond these waves, beyond each northward height,
To where Oppression reared her iron throne,†
And saw, well pleased, her victims round her strown,
Methinks I see a mightier blaze arise
Brightening and blackening the astonished skies.
The light of martyr fires, once kindled there
By Beaton's hand, seems joined in one wild glare;
And, as I gaze, methinks I can behold
Their smoke to heaven in one vast column rolled.

But wandering on, from thence I turn mine eyes
To where yon castle's aged turrets rise.‡
Ye towers that at the call of Freedom rose
To awe and to repel her children's foes!
Ye guardian towers! and must I mourn that you
Have ministered to dark Oppression too?
Did you at her command your gates unfold,
And in your giant grasp her victims hold?
And thou, eternal and majestic rock
Girt with proud strength to stem Invasion's shock,
When on thy bosom the accursed stake
Was set, didst *thou* not from thy sleep awake?

* Greenside, where David Stratton and others were burned at the stake.

† At St. Andrews.

‡ Many martyrs were confined in the Castle of Edinburgh, and some were burned on the Castle Hill.

Didst thou not shake from thine indignant breast
With one wild heave oppressor and oppressed?
No, but a holier duty still was thine:
Thou gav'st the martyr-priests a sacred shrine;
An altar, seen afar by thousand eyes
Whereon they made their lives a sacrifice.

And as I gaze, deep musing, further still
To where the mist half hides the distant hill,*
Sad recollection rises up again,
And scenes of bloodier hue demand my strain;
For when Oppression's iron rod awoke
In Scotia's sons resistance to the yoke,
These hills beheld the despot's power prevail.
These rocks re-echoed falling Freedom's wail
Spilt by the infuriate Tyrant's reeking sword,
Before their feet the martyr's blood was poured
And still by vain resistance roused the more
A fiercer aspect dark Oppression wore
And still more deep the sod of every glen
Was dyed by blood of martyred heroes then.
But still to Scotia's faithful sons was given
A livelier zeal, a firmer trust in heaven.
A deep resolve unflinching to remain,—
Oppression's shock undaunted to sustain,—
Fearless for all their sacred rights contend,
And those best gifts to future times to send;
To teach their sons that Freedom to revere,
For which their fathers paid a price so dear.

Nor hath the spirit fled that nerved each hand,
And fired each heart in that devoted band

* The Pentlands.

Again the trumpet-call to arms is heard,
And all the camp from end to end is stirred:
Again each warrior girds him for the fight;
Again a thousand swords are gleaming bright:
Again a banner floats upon the air;
Still are these sacred words emblazoned there,
CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT. Ho! all ye who
prize
The rights your fathers died for, wake, arise!
In one firm phalanx, one united band,
Undaunted and unflinching, take your stand;
Calm, yet unmoved, constant and undismayed,
What powers soe'er against you be arrayed.

High is the rank to thee, O Scotia, given,
And rich the tokens of a favouring Heaven;
Blest art thou in the light that pours around;
Blest in the hearing of the joyful sound;
Blest in the stream that never-failing runs,
And gives its living waters to thy sons;
Blest in the manly hearts that guard thy shore:
Blest in those scenes, sublimely stern, that pour
Their deep, inspiring influence through the breast;
Yea, God hath blessed thee, and thou shalt be blessed.
But marked thou art among all lands by this,
Thy lofty calling, thy peculiar bliss,
That to thy charge, my country, hath been given
The royal banner of the King of Heaven;
And thou hast still displayed it, wide unfurled,
Before the face of an opposing world.
In weal and woe, 'mid triumph and 'mid scorn,
The blessed ensign still thy sons have borne,

Proclaiming loud, despite of mortal pride,
That Christ is King, and there is none beside.

Bear on that banner still, and let it float
O'er thine own isle, and far 'mid realms remote,
Secure that still shall stand the high degree
That to this King all flesh shall bow the knee,
And every tongue shall be constrained to own
That He is Lord o'er all, and He alone.

NOTES

TO

THE SCOTTISH MARTYRS.

Note 1, p. 163.

"With the restoration of the King,' says Bishop Burnet, "a spirit of extravagant joy spread over the nation that brought on with it the throwing off the very profession of virtue and piety; all ended in entertainments and drunkenness, which overrun the kingdoms to such a degree that it very much corrupted all their morals." For an account of the influence of this event as it affected the Church—the desertion of the cause of the covenant by many who had formerly supported it—and the overturning, by the authority of the "drinking parliament," of all that had been done during the second Reformation, see Hetherington's History, chap. vii.

Note 2, p. 165.

"Argyll defended himself with great eloquence and force of reason, so as nearly to baffle the malice of his enemies, although his death had been determined even before his trial commenced. . . . The sentence was passed, adjudging him to be guilty of high treason, and condemning him to be beheaded, and his head to be affixed in the same place where that of the Marquis of Montrose had been. He received the sentence kneeling; and then rising, said, 'I had the honour to set the crown upon the King's head, and now he hastens me to a better crown than his own '

"To some ministers who were with him in the prison he

said, that shortly they would envy him who was got before them, adding emphatically, 'Mind that I tell it you; my skill fails me if you who are ministers will not either suffer much, or sin much; for though you go along with these men in part, if you do not do it in all things, you are but where you were and must suffer; and if you go not at all with them, you shall but suffer;'—words worthy to be held in lasting remembrance, for the deep wisdom which they contain.

"The next victim was James Guthrie, who may, with strict propriety, be termed the first Scottish martyr for Christ's crown and covenant, inasmuch as the very essence of the accusation brought against him consisted in his declining to subject Christ's kingly and sole dominion over his Church to the arrogated supremacy of any earthly court or monarch. In this, indeed, he but followed the example of Knox, and Melville, and Bruce, and Black, and Welsh, and Calderwood, —in short, of all the great and pious men of both the First and Second Reformations of the Church of Scotland; but he was the first who died for that great and sacred truth for which others had suffered bonds, affliction, and banishment. He died; but the cause for which he suffered martyrdom cannot die. It is living *now*, and once more putting forth those sacred energies before which all human opposition must ultimately be consumed like stubble in the flames. It is, indeed, the chief of those great principles which form the essential characteristics of the Church of Scotland, inclosed imperishably within its very heart, disappearing in times of defection or of lethargy, but reviving and putting forth its undiminished might ever when the re-awakening call of God quickens its vital and eternal powers."—HETHERINGTON'S HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THE LIBERATION OF GREECE

FROM THE

TURKISH YOKE

A PRIZE POEM.

1835.

ARGUMENT.

A LONG time has elapsed, and many changes have taken place in the world, since the Muse was driven from Greece. But though, during that period, the darkness of slavery and ignorance has brooded over that land, it has always been fondly remembered by her, while she wandered among more favoured nations;—and lately, as she strayed upon the shores of Britain, she heard a voice from Greece, sometimes triumphant, sometimes mournful, but always entreating her return. The smouldering fires burst forth on the altar of Liberty—whose favour, however, was only to be regained by great sacrifices. Bozzaris slain in a night-attack on the Turkish camp. All who regard the smile of Liberty are called upon by Heaven to hasten to the aid of Greece—which is thus restored to freedom. Hopes expressed for her regeneration—these mingled with fears Mournful change from her ancient condition—sad feelings awakened even while reflecting on her liberation. We are led to think of those who bled in the earlier part of the struggle for freedom. In fancy we see the poet Riga wandering on the plains of Thessaly, after his return from foreign countries. He recalls to mind the visions of the past and present state of Greece, which haunted his mind during his travels. His thoughts of her primitive state —her advancing civilization—Cecrops—Cadmus—Homer—the Seven Wise Men of Greece—her military glory—Miltiades—Marathon—Thermopylæ—Salamis — Socrates. — Clouds come over her from Macedonia and from Rome—Demosthenes, Aratus, Philopœmen, strive to uphold her, but in vain,—she is subdued by the Romans—and in after ages by the Turks. Desolating effects of Turkish despotism. Turning from the past to the future, bright visions are raised in the mind of

Riga by Hope. On his return home he is deeply affected by the degradation of his country, but not deprived of hope for her. In other lands relics of past times are looked on with pride—in Greece they only reproach the present race. By such thoughts as these Riga is led to devote himself to the attempt to rouse Greece to a struggle for freedom, but he is cut off in the midst of his endeavours. After this the hopes of Greece are dark and dubious. The Hetæri . described allegorically. The progress of the contest for freedom. Greece, in her extremity, calls upon the sons of *Liberty* to come to her assistance—not in vain—England. France, and Russia, unite in her cause—and her freedom is proclaimed amid the thunders of Navarino.

THE LIBERATION OF GREECE

FROM THE

TURKISH YOKE.

I.

Ages have rolled, and wide the glorious sun
Of Truth and Liberty its light hath shed,—
Sages and bards the wreaths of fame have won,
Heroes have fought, and patriots nobly bled,—
Change round the earth its conquering march hath led,
And States have fallen, and lands have burst to light,
Since from thy groves, fair Greece, the Muses fled;
When, driven from Pindus' and Parnassus' height,
They winged to other climes their slow, reluctant flight.

II.

And long, for hapless Greece, since that dark hour,
In vain the light of Truth and Freedom shone;
For o'er her plains did blackest Slavery lower,
And dull Oblivion claimed them for its own,
And, while *her* sons in chains were doomed to groan—
But *inly* groan, nor dare *assert* their right—
The Muse, to other lands more favoured flown,
Found many a lofty mind whereon to light,
And sang on many a plain, and soared to many a height.

III.

Still as she strayed and shed her smiles around,
And purest souls with rapturing influence blessed,
No lovelier spot on earth she ever found,—
No mind in which she was a happier guest,—
Than when thy sons, fair Greece, her reign confess'd;
Nor aught could make her willingly forget
The land she loved the earliest and the best,
Or bid her heart less bitterly regret
The hour—the gloomy hour, when Grecian glory set.

IV.

And while an exile from her Greece she roved,
And at her smile some smiled, while many scoff'd,—
Still was it Memory's voice that most she loved,
And still, when Evening's shades fell sweetly soft,
She'd bear her raptured votary's soul aloft,
And bid him through the mist of ages gaze,
And on his listening ear she chanted oft
The songs—the tales of her young, happy days,
And in triumphant strains sang many a hero's praise.

V.

But late, as, wandering on Britannia's shore,
She poured upon the air a wild-tuned lay,
Warbling symphonious to the Ocean's roar,
With her from whom she never loved to stray—
Fair Liberty, who led from Greece the way,
Where *she* awhile stayed lovingly behind
To catch the sun of Glory's latest ray,
There came a voice upon the fitful wind—
A voice from Hellas' sons, of joy and woe combined.

VI.

Now, pealing loud across the gladdened water,
In joyful strains the changeful voice was borne.
Now, mingling with the shrieks and groans of slaughter,
It seemed the blight of glorious hopes to mourn.—
But still, fair Muse, it called thee to return,
And prayers and incense rose to Liberty,
Where broken long had lain the sacred urn,—
The heart, whose aspirations to be free,
The sweetest incense are to Freedom and to thee.

VII.

There, stirred once more, and fanned by winds from heaven,
Your sacred fires again were seen to glow.
Th' incumbent heap of dross and ashes riven,
The heat—the bursting flame began to show
The spark that unextinguished lurked below.
In vain did despot Fury o'er that flame
Bid the black streams of Persecution flow,—
Streams which must still become, and then became
But fuel to the fire they blindly seek to tame.

VIII.

Nor vainly, Freedom, did that flame arise
From thy old, mouldering altars once again.
Nor couldst thou view the suffering—hear the cries
Of thy long loved, thy long lost sons in vain;
But many a victim at thine altars slain—
And many a prayer, and blood in torrents poured,
And years of toil and woe alone might gain
Thy smile who long hadst ceased to be adored,
Ere all thy priceless gifts could be to Greece restored.

IX.

And there *was* many a costly sacrifice,
And noblest life's blood at thy shrine was shed.
No nobler, brighter soul e'er sought the skies,
Than when brave Bozzaris to combat led
His chosen band, and, self-devoted, b'ed.
And though there were, who rashly—basely sought,*
To rob the treasures to thine altar paid,
And though there were who dross for treasure brought,
Yea, though there were who seemed to hold thy smiles
at nought,—

X.

Yet didst thou look with pity on the race
Thou once hadst loved so well.—Yet couldst thou see
(Howe'er the dross of slavery might deface
The mind that shone so purely when 't was free)
In each true Greek a quenchless love of thee.
And when from out the depths to Heaven they cried,
Thou spak'st—not *thou—that* God who bade thee be
The guardian of mankind, when He had tried
The Greeks in hottest fires, and humbled low their
pride,

XI.

To all who knew—who loved thee, then He spake,
And pointed to the Turk, and bade them go,
And to its base the Moslem's glory shake,
And bid the bloated reptile shrink, and know
That not in vain th' Almighty's altars glow,—
And not in vain the blood had cried to Heaven,
That bigot Tyranny had made to flow,
And not in vain the Heavenly faith was given,
That lit His sacred fires, when thou from Greece wast
driven.

* Referring to the Greek loan, which was much mismanaged, and, as is generally believed, put in part to private purposes.

XII.

He spake—'t was done—and thou, fair Greece, cam'st forth.
And shalt thou be again what once thou wast—
The eye—the boast—the glory of the earth?
Thy long, long night of dull oblivion past,
Shall not thy sun as brightly rise at last
As once it shone on thee?—Or, if some cloud
A dark'ning shadow o'er thy *morning* cast,
Shall not thy *mid-day* splendour be as proud?
Shall not thy praise o'er earth again be sung as loud?

XIII.

Yes, Hellas!—yet upon thy sacred hill,
Amid thy groves, and o'er thy lovely plain,
The Muses' notes of joy again shall thrill!
And other lands shall hear them—not in vain;
There hearts and harps shall answering thrill again,
And *Hope's* to thee the *sweetest* notes shall seem,
But *Memory's* shall be the *loudest* strain;
Nor even on ardent Fancy's wildest dream,
Shines forth thy rising sun as once it wont to beam.

XIV.

Even now, as notes of triumph from thy shore
Bid Hope across her harp her fingers fling
And wake a cheerful strain for thee once more,
Ere yet these joyful notes have ceased to ring,
The Muse returns with Memory to sing,
And bids the hasty hand of Hope refrain
To tear away the mournful weeds that cling
About her harp, and let them still remain
To blend some deep, sad notes with her triumphant strain.

XV.

For while she sees her long-lost Greece arise,
Shake off her chains, and stand among the free,—
While her,—as some recovered friend—she eyes,
On each loved feature gazing earnestly,
Even now, I ween, it saddens her to see
That once bright mind, fair form, and dauntless brow
Still clouded—still debased.—O! can it be
That 't was that mind—that arm, so powerless now,
That once bade all admire—that bade the Persian bow!

XVI.

Thine ancient glories, 't is not mine to sing,
(Though, as o'er these I glance, methinks I see
The Muse already trim her eager wing,)
What once thou wast—or what thou yet may'st be—
I ask not.—'T is enough that thou *art free.*
Yes, thou art *free!*—and, at that magic word,
Where is the heart that thrills not joyfully?
And yet, in pensive mood when it is heard,
Not joyful all—though sweet—the feelings that are stirred.

XVII.

For, as we view thy sun's reviving rays,
And feel its cheering influence o'er us glow,
Still other feelings, as we longer gaze,
Rise, o'er our heart a mournful gloom to throw.
Our thoughts revert to the long night of woe,
Whose darkness from the land scarce yet hath fled;
And deeper still these sadd'ning feelings grow,
As more we muse:—from joy we turn to shed
A grateful tear for those who, unrequited, bled.

XVIII.

And, on these recollections whilst I dwell,
My mind will paint it scenes of fancied woes,
And thoughts, and words, and feelings on me swell,
Such as, perchance, might be the thoughts of those
Who dwelt in Greece ere yet her sun arose.—
Even now before me do her plains arise;
One wanders there—'tis one the Muse well knows,—
'T is Riga!* Absent long 'neath other skies,
He wanders forth to muse, unseen by mortal eyes.

XIX.

'T is night, the hour—the pensive hour that woos
The soul to meditate on times gone by,—
On friends we see no more; when, as we muse
On long departed joys,—we know not why—
Such pleasure mingles with our frequent sigh
As day brings not.—Come, let us list unseen,
As, on the plains of his loved Thessaly,
The patriot bard pours to the listening e'en
His thought of what his Greece—is not, but once had been.

XX.

"Welcome, ye hallowed shades—ye darkened skies!
I come to meditate, as o'er the tomb
Of one for ever hidden from mine eyes,
And, while I muse, may all my thoughts assume
A cast congenial to your pensive gloom;
And while, fair Greece, thy hapless child, I mourn
My mother dead and my own orphan doom,
Yet, gazing o'er these plains—thy funeral urn—
O, may I feel, even now, thy spirit in me burn!

* A poet whose songs and other productions contributed greatly to rouse the Greeks to a struggle for freedom. He spent a considerable time in improving his mind and acquiring knowledge in foreign countries

XXI.

" In other climes—less lovely and less loved—
Where, in my youth, a pilgrim to the shrine
Of thy once favouring Muses, late I roved,
At midnight worshipping the lovely Nine,—
Even yet in every Poet's dreams divine.—
While there with melancholy steps I strayed,
Far, far from all that spake of thee or thine,
Why loved I so the midnight's gloomy shade,
And almost loathed the day, with all its vain parade?

XXII.

" Whence, as at eve I roamed abroad to catch
The sun's last glow, in dying beauty bright,—
Whence, as I fondly lingered still to watch
The slow approach of the descending night,—
Whence came those visions that, before my sight,
Seemed on the slowly shifting clouds to roll?—
And whence, too, came that strange—that wild delight,
That tumult in the feelings of my soul,—
As Night's dark cloud-borne car seemed hastening to its goal?

XXIII.

" 'Twas that the darkness that enwraps thy doom
A constant shadow o'er my mind had thrown,
And, in my heart, with Midnight's mournful gloom
A strange congeniality had grown.
And when the day to other climes had flown,
And slowly sank the world around to rest,
She seemed to smile on me, as, all alone,
I hailed her car approaching from the West,
And silent beckoned me to be awhile her guest.

XXIV.

"And half unconscious did my soul obey
The grateful summons, and, upon her car,
Was wafted swiftly to the skies away,
Beyond the bounds of every earthly bar,
And borne to regions unexplored afar,—
And visions saw unseen by mortal eye;
And sounds I heard—such as they hear who are
Of Heaven.—The past before me flitted by,
And flashed across my mind the bright Futurity.

XXV.

"And there was Music 'mongst the starry choirs,
And still, as various worked each magic spell,
The spheres accordant tuned their heavenly lyres,
And bade the varied incantation swell.
And, as the charm allowed mine eyes to dwell
On sights of glory, or on scenes of woe,
Upon my ravished ears alternate fell
Now the loud peal—the joyous thrilling flow,
Now notes of dismal sound, and dolorously slow.

XXVI.

"Come, Memory! (for thine the spell that first,
When Night had borne my soul to yonder skies,
Raised the bright visions on my mind that burst,)
Be with me now, and to my longing eyes
O bid again these glorious scenes arise!
And O, prophetic Hope! again display,
To my rapt soul, thine awful mysteries;
And thou, O Spirit of Truth! to thee I pray
Flash o'er each rising scene thy pure uncolouring ray.

XXVII.

"Ye tuneful spheres, that still harmonious roll
Along the sky,—your music yet I hear;
Not as it then entranced my spell-bound soul
Flowing in mystic numbers, full and clear,—
But still while Fancy, dwelling in mine ear,
Turns into music every gentler sound,
As now I gaze to Heaven, it doth appear
As if I heard the soft strains rise around,
As then they gently breathed o'er all the enchanted ground;

XXVIII.

"When, swelling faintly, calmly sweet, at first,
As from a lyre touched by some fairy hand,
As louder, bolder, on my ear they burst,
I saw a bright yet earthly scene expand.
It was, methought, to me no stranger land,—
Yet scarce it seemed like any e'er I knew,—
So rude, so wild, appeared the roving band,
That with their flocks and herds there idly grew,—
But ah! what hills—what plains so fair! what skies so blue!

XXIX.

"Yes! it could only be—it was in truth—
The land whose ties I ne'er could wish to break;
Land of my hopes—my fears! Land of my youth!
Scene of my every dream—asleep,—awake,—
Or in that state which doth of both partake,
In which our dreams are sweetest and most wild.
'Twas Greece! my mother! she, for whose dear sake,
I could have roved for ever, self-exiled.
And now she seemed herself a young and healthy child.

XXX.

" But wild, as yet, her youthful mind had grown,
And such its fruits had been as Nature breeds
Spontaneous. From its soil had sprung alone
Brambles and wild flowers and luxuriant weeds,
And all that from the uncultured ground proceeds,
Till, from the glowing regions of the South,*
Where first were scattered Learning's precious seeds,
Bold Cecrops came—the fosterer of her youth,
And Cadmus oped to her the glorious fount of truth.

XXXI.

" In vision now her first-born sons passed on.
Heroes were there, but chief I marked a hoar
Old minstrel†—ay the glorious heaven-taught one!
And, as he swept his harp beside the shore,
The waves made concert to it with their roar;
And the spheres hushed their lyres,—though they had been
His teachers, and had often used to pour
Their music to him, till, no longer seen,
They sang not, but would list his harp, well pleased, I ween.

XXXII.

" A Constellation bursts upon mine eyes!
The Pleiades, in Hellas' sky that burn,—
The glorious seven!—the greatly—early wise!
But from those peaceful sages must I turn
To view the battle-field,—rejoice and mourn
While hearing now the shout of victory,—
Now sighing o'er the heroes' laurelled urn;-
Now, by one hand see Freedom prostrate lie,—
Raised by one hand again, reviving Liberty.

* Cecrops and Cadmus both came from Egypt. † Homer.

XXXIII.

" And, gazing still, delighted Fancy sees
The dark, innumerable, slavish horde
Of Persia, baffled by Miltiades.
Now, Greece, thy breast with glorious wounds is gored,
In bleak Thermopylæ by barbarous swo d.
And now again I see the Persian host,
Like a wild, roaring mountain billow, poured
Upon the 'wooden walls' that guard thy coast,
And view its foaming force back in derision toss'd.

XXXIV.

" Various the scenes I saw,—and glorious all;—
For many a hero passed, and many a sage,
Whose names are talismans that can recall
The deeds that shine in many a storied page,
Whose names have been—shall be, in every age,
The watchwords of the free,—words that excite
In every breast a sympathetic rage—
Imp every Muse's wing to bolder flight,
And nerve the heart—the arm that combats for its right.

XXXV.

" And then I heard the heavenly music swell
To strains still more sublime.—Its lofty tone
Appeared in conscious triumph to foretell
The approach of some exalted, heaven-taught one,—
That should outshine all that before had gone,—
And Socrates burst forth, and with him brought
That pure, seréne, ethereal light that shone
Around him from the deep recess of thought,—
That light, 'midst which he met even death,—unawed
by aught.

XXXVI.

" But, Greece, thy sun of glory now had passed
Its bright meridian, and full many a cloud,
Sweeping thy once clear skies, now o'er it cast
A dark and gloomily portentous shroud.
By various blasts conveyed, I saw them crowd
The sky.—'T was thy own discords brought them first;
From Macedonia then the storm grew loud;—
Then Rome bade all her thunders o'er thee burst,
And clouds around thee closed—ah! ne'er to be dispers'd.

XXXVII.

" Yet, while these storms thy lovely skies defaced,
Thy sun at times its brightness would resume,
And o'er thee still its cheering radiance cast;
As when, the gathering darkness to illume,
Demosthenes arose; or, o'er thy doom
When darker still the clouds of Fate had met,
Aratus, Philopœmen, cheered the gloom;
Showed that thy sun, though *darkened*, had not *set*,
And, though full oft obscured, was on the Horizon yet.

XXXVIII.

"'And, 'mid the darkness of thy dim twilight,
The Muses lingered, in their Greece to sing,
As birds that, carolling their fond good-night
To all around, still hover on the wing,
While the once glorious day is vanishing;
Though now more melancholy seems their tone
To him who, to their sweet notes listening,
Upon the sun that late so brightly shone
Gazes, while slow it sinks, till they with it are gone.

XXXIX.

" But Time, with desolating step, swept on,
And with it came the Turk,—and I beheld
Another scene,—thy glories, Greece, were gone!—
Gone—save the scattered monuments of Eld.—
For Freedom's tree had withered, and was felled.
Throughout thy land no cheerful note was heard;
Amid thy groves the voice of song was quelled!
Nought save the moanings of Minerva's bird,*
The cold and noxious air of thy dark midnight stirred.

XL.

" It was the awful silence of the grave,
Unbroken—save by mourner's wail and tread;—
It was the silence of the skulking *slave*,
More dreadful than the silence of the *dead*,—
For 't was the offspring of *soul*-dead'ning dread.
It was the silence of a desert heath,
Where all around is desolation spread;—
Where hath been harvest for the reaper *Death*,
Who thence hath gone to hold his Harvest-home beneath.

XLI.

" Still, as these visions passed before mine eyes,
And as intent I gazed, in them to see
Thy *glory*, Greece, and then thy *shame* arise,
How burned the hopes that thou might'st yet be free!
For could I deem them vain? and could it be
That for thy sons no name hath now a spell
To rouse to arms for Freedom and for thee,—
That in their souls those fires no longer dwell
That bade their fathers' breasts with patriot ardour swell?

* The Owl.

XLII.

"Thus, even while musing o'er the mystic train
Of varied visions, which, at the control
Of Memory rose to people Night's domain,
With bright-eyed Hope my longing, anxious sou
Held converse, and her smiles the blackness stole
From the dark visions raised by Memory's spell.
And, as I saw the clouds o'er Hellas roll,
Some voice amid the silence seemed to tell
That next on future scenes my raptured eyes might dwell.

XLIII.

"Then Hope advanced, and, o'er th' enchanted land,
With mystic signs proclaimed her joyous sway;
And as she, smiling, waved her magic wand,
Melted the darkness from the land away:
And soft and faint at first the gladdening ray
Stole through the gloom that o'er it wont to brood.
Red flushed the skies, as nearer drew the day,
Till Freedom's rising sun poured forth a flood
Of glory o'er the scene—tinged with the hue of blood.

XLIV.

"With glorious meaning seemed the vision fraught,
As wildly bright it burst upon my view;
And, as intent the sphere-born strains I caught,
More wild, more changeful, and more glad they grew;
But, when the coming day still nearer drew,
The fair enchantress gave the final stroke;
And, as the skies assumed a heavenly blue,
The music died away—the spell was broke,
For hope gave way to joy—and from my trance I woke.

XLV.

" And such, fair Greece, when far from thee I roved,
The visions that entranced my joyful sight;
And hence it was that still so much I loved
To hold communion with the mystic night;
And hence the mingled feelings—the delight,
The softened sadness, that she brought to me;
For still, as fled the day's gay, dazzling light,
My soul would turn again to think of thee,
As of some one I loved—but might no longer see.

XLVI.

" I thougbt of thee as 't were of something holy,
And something cursed seemed to me thy foes.
And 't was a sweet and awful melancholy
That stole upon me, as the thoughts arose
Of thy past glories and thy present woes;
And that soft sympathy for thee I felt
Which o'er the faults of absent loved ones throws
An hallowed veil; and then it bade me melt
In pity—not in hate, if upon thine I dwelt.

XLVII.

" But when returning, Greece, to thee again,
I mingled with the deep-degraded race
That skulk in bondage on thy lovely plain,
How sicken'd then my heart in all to trace
The progress of corruption and disgrace,—
Too deeply marked, though *man* alone appears,
These scenes—else still how glorious!—to deface,
With craven heart, unroused by hopes—by fears—
Or by the stirring voice that speaks from bygone years.

XLVIII.

"These mountain caves—these glens that shelter now
The robber flying from a despot's view,
Have heard thy sons breathe out the glorious vow,
That to their country and to freedom true,
Unsheathed should be the swords they dauntless drew,
Save in a tyrant's heart, till Freedom's reign
Should be acknowledged and confirmed anew,
And blood should wash from thy indignant plain
The foot-prints of thy foes—Oppression's loathed stain.

XLIX.

"And is it now indeed the sleep of death
That chains thy giant mind—thy mighty hand?
No! still dost thou inhale the vital breath,
And, come but Liberty, and wave her wand
In mystic circles o'er thy slumbering land,
Instant thy long, inglorious trance shall cease;
And, thronging at her call, the sister band
Of Graces, bringing all the arts of Peace,
Shall come to hail again, and beautify their Greece!

L.

"Too long, alas! insensate hast thou lain,
And heavy have thy slumbers been and deep;
But shall the Muse still call on thee in vain?
Ah, no! this harp Hope cheers me still to sweep,—
Nor only to bid Pity o'er thee weep,—
But in a strain high-swelling, clear and loud
To bid thee rise from thy long, death-like sleep,
To life—to action,—to cast off thy shroud,
And bid the Tyrant quail, to whom thy spirit bowed!

LI.

"Greece! I have gazed, and I have loved to gaze,
(For thy lost spirit dwelt with me the while,)
On mouldering relics of long-vanished days—
The tower—the palace—and the vaulted aisle,
That long have ceased alike to frown and smile;
Pleased have I looked, even deeply while I sighed,
In distant lands, on many a hoary pile
That time and war and change have beautified,
And hallowed while they stole the trappings of its pride.

LII.

"And as I heard their freeborn sons relate,
That in a bygone—ne'er forgotten age,
These towers, ere yet they felt the stroke of Fate,
Withstood the oppressor's, and the invader's rage;—
That in these aisles dwelt many a saint and sage;
Nor vainly, now, the deeds that kept them free
Each race succeeding reads in history's page;—
Then have I sighed, and thought, fair Greece, of thee;
Thought of what *once* thou wast—what thou *no more* mayst be.

LIII.

"Doth not each pile whose mouldering ruins tell
That here thy sons of old the foe withstood,—
That here some field was won, some hero fell,—
Some army drenched the ground with hostile blood,
Or checked the torrent of Oppression's flood,—
Doth not each monument of glory speak
Their shame who now, in dastard silence, brood
O'er woes,—o'er vengeance that they dare not wreck
And inly curse the chain they never strive to break?"

* * * * * *

LIV.

Cease we to list these plaintive strains, nor ask
What fate, ere long, laid low the Patriot's head
Who thus lamented:—nor be ours the task
To say what blood by Tyranny was shed,—
What darkness o'er the land Despair had spread.
Turn we, at length, to view a brighter scene,
To see the plain, where all seemed black and dead,
Burst forth again, in renovated green,*
And Freedom's tree give fruits such as its first had been.

LV.

When through the land, from every guardian hil
Sprung from the founts that never dried could b
Swelled by Heaven's dew, full many a secret rill
Flowed clear—yet strong—rejoicing silently
To swell the mighty Nile, that to the sea
Of Freedom—deep and pure, yet secret—flowe
And by its side grew many a stately tree;
And every ray that burst the darkening cloud,
By it alone returned, with lively lustre glowed.

LVI.

But all around in desolation lay,
And the heart sickened at the joyless sight; [ray
Naught save these streams seemed gladdened by the
That broke the darkness of the surly night.
But the lone stars that still shot down their light
Upon the desert's wide spread, cheerless dearth,
Amid the gloomy, universal blight,
Sought these fair rills that lonely gilt the earth,
With them rejoicing still—but with a chastened mirth.

* The following three stanzas refer to the Hetæria, a society whose object was the regeneration of Greece, and which was for some time secret.

LVII.

And onward, silent, and unseen at first,
The waters flowed throughout the blighted ground;
Till, swelling high and gathering strength, they burst,
Like the Egyptian river, every bound,
Refreshing all the thirsty land around,
And pouring their red current dark and deep;
While, roused in terror by the rushing sound
Of that great deluge in its mighty sweep,
In wrath the despot rose, as from a troubled sleep.

LVIII.

Then host met host, and in each bosom there
Passions more strong than mortal seemed to reign.
Revenge and scorn and hatred and despair
Raved through each maddened breast—a frantic train.
In all the crowds that thronged the blood-strewn plain,
Christian and Turk—oppressor and oppressed—
Tyrant and slave—in all, alike, in vain
You seek one generous—one relenting breast:
By wild and headlong rage is every heart possessed.

LIX.

The indignant Greek, by every thought impelled,
By every passion—wrath and pride and fear,—
While on his soul the recollection swelled
Of all that to his patriot heart was dear,
When rushed the din of battle on his ear,
Well might he then exult with fierce delight;
And as he onward pressed in wild career,
Well might the turmoil of that desperate fight
To yet more phrensied zeal his fiery breast excite.

LX.

And when the sounds of strife had died away,
And night sank down upon the crimson plain,
Could that dead calm, which spread around, allay
The tumult of his heart and fevered brain?
No! even the songs of triumph then were vain
To banish from his thoughts the ills that preyed
Upon his country's breast;—her heroes slain—
Her sons enslaved—her glory prostrate laid.
And was no arm stretched forth, that suffering land to aid?

LXI.

Didst thou sleep, Britain, in thy awful might,—
Thou delegate of Heaven, upraised by God?
Couldst thou in vain hear Greece assert her right,
Groaning beneath the blood-stained, iron rod
Of a proud tyrant, whose despotic nod,
(As when the black Siroc o'er some fair soil
Breathes desolation and despair abroad,)
Could of their dearest rights her sons despoil,
And bid the sickened heart of Liberty recoil?

LXII.

Say was there not a voice within thy breast
That bade thee rise and stretch thy hand to save,—
A voice that bade thy heart disdain to rest
Unmoved, whilst Greece remained a struggling slave?
Called not each long-lost hero, from his grave?
Seemed not each bard to breathe throughout his strain,
"Come, sons of Liberty, o'er land and wave,
Champions of Freedom! shall we call in vain?
Shall not your voice—your arm bid Greece be Greece again!"

LXIII.

No, Britons! not in vain ye heard the cry,—
It was the cry of long enduring woe;
Faith, Mercy, Justice, bade ye loud reply
We will, we come to pay the debt we owe
To her who first bade Science dwell below,
We come, by Gratitude and Pity warmed,
To strike for God—for Greece,—for all—the blow;
We come, by wounded Freedom's cries, alarmed;
We come, with zeal and wrath, and might and thunder armed!

LXIV.

Nor came from Britain's sons alone the voice
That bade the tyrant fall—the slave be free—
The abodes of misery again rejoice!
For, when arose the Empress of the Sea,
Rose all around the sons of Liberty,
And, in their cannons' hoarse, united roar,
The world, rejoicing, heard the glad decree
That, echoed loud from Navarino's shore,
Bade Greece shake off her chains, and be a slave no more!

IMAGINATION

A TALE.

IMAGINATION.

A TALE.

I.

Autumn had tinged the forests, and the sun
Was shedding from the West his tranquil rays,
When through a peaceful vale I strayed with one
Who there, with simple heart, had passed his days ;—
One who from infancy had loved to gaze
On Nature's face, and had by her been taught
The deep, pure lessons her sweet voice conveys
To those who love her. Thus, by kindred thought
And feeling, in our hearts confiding trust was wrought.

II.

Onward we strayed, till on our view arose
The modest village Church: and soon we found
Our wandering steps allured to where repose,
In the sweet stillness of the hallowed ground,
They whose calm lives had in the vales around
Been passed; and, while the simple words we traced
That told who rested 'neath each grassy mound,
Among the stones by Time's rude hand defaced,
Mine eye was fixed on one which there had late been placed.

III.

It told that there reposed what e'er could die
Of four who all the immortal crown had won,
Though led to their inheritance on high
By various paths:—a mother, and a son,
And the sweet sister of his heart, and one
Dearer—if dearer still to him could be.
I questioned my companion how begun
And ended how their pilgrimage, and he
Made answer, while his breast heaved deep and pensively.

IV.

Well did I know them all, he said, and dear
They were to me; ah! rarely may be found
Spirits of purer mould than those who here
Have left their mortal coil. To all around
Lovely and pleasant were their lives; but bound
Unto my heart was he whose cherished name
Is graved on that sad stone, by ties which wound
Still closer, as more near the dark hour came,
That left me nought of him but his cold lifeless frame.

V.

In truth, together though our boyhood grew,
And to no ear would he more trustingly
Confide his thoughts than mine, I never knew
His nature then aright; there seemed to me
About him somewhat of a mystery,—
A blending of strange opposites of mind;
Nor, as I since have marked it, could I see
The plan whereby a gracious Heaven designed
That chaos vast and dark in harmony to bind.

VI.

Yea, to himself a mystery he seemed,—
A thing by every wind tossed to and fro;
And hence it was that, though his spirit teemed
With ever-varying thought, he shunned to throw
Its dark recesses open, and to show
To others—what himself ill understood—
The hidden source of rapture and of woe
Which ruled his being; and he loved to brood
Over his own deep thoughts in cherished solitude.

VII.

And it was not till many a varied year
With hallowing influence o'er his head had rolled,
That, as he felt his last hour drawing near,
And as we called to mind the days of old,
With deep and humble gratitude he told
How he, a wayward, wandering sheep, had been
By the Great Shepherd gathered to the fold.
Then, as we strayed o'er each familiar scene,
He told what storms had tossed that soul, now so serene.

VIII.

And, as he opened all his heart to me,
While all he gazed upon recalled some thought
Or feeling of his youth, he bade me see
How strange a work may in the soul be wrought
Where reigns imagination, all untaught
To yield to sterner powers; and where she sways
A mind unconscious whence those spells are brought
That bind it:—yet what bliss she oft conveys
And healing to the heart she rules not but obeys.

IX.

Gentle from earlier years, he never loved
The scenes of boisterous mirth and discord rude,
But oft he fled from these, and lonely roved
Far from the hum of the gay multitude,
Through deep, sequestered dell or mazy wood;
Or down the banks of some meandering stream
His devious way at evening he pursued,
And yielded all his soul to some sweet dream,
While pleasing fancies thick within his soul would teem.

X.

And yet he had a love of human kind,
A deep desire of human sympathies;
And wheresoe'er he found a kindred mind,
He felt it bound to his by viewless ties;
But few were these, alas! and from his eyes
Oft doomed to pass, unknown to his embrace;
As lovely visions in our dreams will rise,
And vanish, leaving no abiding trace,
Save feelings deep and pure which nothing can efface.

XI.

And, even thus early, in his spirit dwelt
Strange wild imaginings,—yet high and pure;
And deep and strong emotions, rarely felt
By boyhood's careless heart; and, though obscure
And vague his visions rose, yet could they lure
His fancy on and on through many a maze,
Well pleased if treasures such as might endure
Should rise at last upon its eager gaze,
Bu feeling that the search its own sweet toil o'erpays.

XII.

And, conscious to himself that he could find
In gay companions, full of life and mirth,
Small sympathy in those strange moods of mind,
Even had he words wherewith to body forth
His wayward feelings, or to trace their birth,
He hid them in his breast, like seeds which, cast
Into the bosom of the fostering earth,
Evolve themselves in secret, but at last
Spring forth, prepared to bear the sunbeam and the blast.

XIII.

And often would he quit the noisy throng
And wander forth alone, in musing mood,
Pouring his soul the while in pensive song.
Yet, as he strayed through trackless glen or wood,
At times an awful sense of solitude
Sank on his soul, and he would take his seat
Upon some mossy bank, and sadly brood
O'er thoughts and feeling which, though now so sweet,
Prepared him ill, he knew, the storms of life to meet.

XIV.

But hours there were when on his spirit fell
'Mid these lone scenes a soothing influence;
And what or how it was he could not tell,
Nor, while he felt its magic, knew he whence
Its power, but all things then—even things of sense.
With feelings like his own appeared to glow,
And then he almost felt he could dispense
With human sympathies—so cold and slow,
While Nature thus partook in all his joy and woe.

XV.

Fixed he would stand, and mute, while not a sound
Broke the deep hush ; the flood-gates of his soul
Opened as of themselves ;—from all around
A tide of vast emotions seemed to roll.
Concentrating th spirit of the whole
Within his swelling bosom : calm and deep
Over his thirsting heart the waters stole,
But oft o'er every barrier would they leap,
And one wide whelming flood o'er all his soul would sweep.

XVI.

And Nature ever varied to his view ;
For, as his fitful fancies inly wrought,
Giving his mind a sad or lively hue,
Her lovely face a like expression caught,
And stood a mirror to her cast of thought.
Still, as more strong his own emotions rose,
With feeling more intense his breast seemed fraught ;
And the sweet sanction sympathy bestows
Now nursed his nascent joys, now fed his cherished woes.

XVII.

If he was glad, the flowers that o'er the mead
Sported with nodding heads,—the purling stream,—
The waves that gently flow and soft recede,
As if in frolic with the dancing beam,—
The lake that smilingly appeared to gleam
Rejoicing in the mild and mellowed light,—
All with a voice of kindliest tone would seem
His wandering footsteps fondly to invite,
And as the sun sunk down they softly said, Good night!

XVIII.

But if some saddening thought within his soul
Had bowed his yielding heart beneath its sway,
All Nature, too, was changed by its control;
A deeper sadness tinged the evening ray,
The murmuring streams bewailed the fading day;
The wind, in mournful tone, appeared to sigh;
The lake in melancholy silence lay;
A pensive gloom seemed to his musing eye
To brood o'er all the earth and spread throughout the
sky.

XIX.

And, on this wondrous mirror while he gazed,
Pleased, with a childlike pleasure, to behold
An image of his own deep feelings raised
In every star and every cloud that rolled
Athwart the sky; and while the mountains old
Spoke of the unchanging God's protecting power;
Like gentle hearts, from stormy blasts and cold
Shielded by Him, he deemed each lowly flower
Which at that mountain's base bloomed forth its little
hour.

XX.

Yet, while in Nature's volume thus he found
That which deep feelings in his soul could wake—
While to his listening heart the scenes around
Of the Creator's glory sweetly spake;
Alas! their soft voice lured him to forsake
That holier Book which he deemed writ alone
For souls of mould too earthly to partake
That finer sense through which the heavenly tone
Of Nature's voice is heard and her deep mysteries known.

XXI.

"Here," he exclaimed, "and here alone, we find
A fitting temple, arched by yon bright skies,
Wherein to worship the Eternal Mind
With pure and acceptable sacrifice;
Here, on the wings of love, our souls arise,
Communion with the God of Heaven to hold;
Here, by his own hand written, to our eyes
Doth Nature's book his character unfold;
It let us read, no more by creeds and forms controlled."

XXII.

Yet there upon his mind would oft intrude
Dark doubts by which his inmost soul was riven;
And reasoning he would ask, "If God be good,—
As good He surely is whose love hath given
This lovely Earth, o'erhung by yon fair heaven,
For man's abode,—oh! wherefore then this chain
Of linked sin and woe, which men have striven
By every art to break—but striven in vain;
Showing the sin more black, and feeling more the pain?

XXIII.

"If He is just—as just he needs must be
Who ruleth over all, supremely blest
Without man's aid,—then wherefore do we see
The wicked triumph and the good oppressed,
The hardened sinner in his heart at rest,
While still the just go mourning;—or if all
Alike bear sin within their rebel breast,—
If boundless guilt for boundless vengeance call,
Why then so long forbears Destruction's bolt to fall?"

XXIV.

While thus he mused, all Nature seemed o'ercast
With gloom. The sun's glad rays appeared to mock
The darkness of the soul. The moaning blast,—
The lowering cloud—the tempest-riven rock,—
The voice of thunder,—the convulsive shock
Of elements,—with these he felt at one,
But gentler voices could not now unlock
The cell of this shut heart, which sought to shun
Such tones, with which it felt no more in unison.

XXV.

Then on some jutting rock, amid the rush
Of rolling waters, where the whitening spray
Dashed wild around him, while the crimson blush
Of eve was fading into pensive gray,
He loved to sit and muse the hours away.
It seemed as if in the stream's brawling sound
Amid the calmness of the closing day,
Something accordant with those thoughts he found
Which stirred his restless soul while stillness reigned around.

XXVI.

One lovely eve of a bright summer's day,
When peace and soft repose were brooding o'er
The fading scene he chanced alone to stray
To a sweet spot to which he ne'er before
Had wandered. Thither from the neighbouring shore
The dashing waves sent a deep, lulling sound,
And Heaven, and Earth, and Sea, an aspect wore
Of tranquil beauty and of calm profound,
Which deepened 'mid the shade of the dark woods around.

XXVII.

There as he wandered, o'er his thoughtful breast
That strangely pleasing melancholy rose
Which the soul would not, if it could, resist,
But to its power will yield, though scarce it knows
Whence that o'ermastering fascination flows;
And through the mind strange fancies then will steal
Tinged with the pensive hue which Sadness throws
O'er all that we behold, or hear, or feel;
Nor care we from its sway to Reason to appeal.

XXVIII.

Along the winding path he slowly strayed;
And still his musing eyes were turned aside,
While the far gleaming ocean he surveyed,
Where slow the sun was sinking in his pride,
Pouring his glory o'er the illumined tide;
And, on that magic scene as tranced he gazed,
Bright images of beauty all allied
By mystic ties, within his soul were raised,
And spell-bound long he stood, at his own work amazed.

XXIX.

Thus while he wandered o'er the mazy track,
Drinking the beams that bathed the hills and skies
In floods of light, sudden he started back,
As if before him his astonished eyes
Had seen some dreamlike apparition rise.
With noiseless step the path he quick retraced;
But soon, recovered from his sweet surprise,
He turned, repenting of his timorous haste,
To where the shadowing trees their branches interlaced:

XXX.

And hidden there he stood, and gazed intent
On that fair form that on his sight had beamed
So like a spirit. Her soft eyes were bent
Upon the setting sun, whose radiance seemed
As if into her very soul it streamed,
Feeding her spirit as with angel's food,
Her tranced eyes with such pure rapture gleamed;
And hence he shunned, with foot profane and rude,
On the deep bliss of that bright being to intrude.

XXXI.

And still, as longer on that form he dwelt,
He lingered, bound by spells yet stronger there;
And still more deeply in his soul he felt
How hard his still unsated eyes to tear
From gazing where she stood—so heavenly fair,—
So like those images of loveliness
He oft had dreamed of, but could never dare
To hope that Earth a being might possess,
Who with such charms as these his waking eye might bless.

XXXII.

Her hair like light clouds floated on the wind;
In her pale brow deep thought appeared to lie;
Her form and features all were full of mind;
A pure soul seemed to dwell in her bright eye
Of deep, soft blue, like Evening's pensive sky,
When one sweet star from its calm depth shines forth;
And holy feelings, thoughts serene and high,
Seemed to have almost severed her from earth,
And made her like a thing of more than mortal birth.

XXXIII.

Slowly began the sun to disappear,
And a soft, tranquil gloom o'erspread the sky;
And, as she still gazed on, a starting tear
Came, like a dew-drop, o'er her musing eye:
Perhaps the whelming thoughts of days gone by
Had rushed upon her soul; for at that hour
(The heart so yields itself to Memory)
The sinking sun—a withering leaf or flower
With thoughts of faded joys will all the soul o'erpower.

XXXIV.

Now softly set the beaming stars that shone
From her clear eyes with pure and placid ray;
And now he felt a sweeter light was gone
Than ever flowed from the bright source of day.
She lightly dashed the glistening tear away,
And cast her pensive eyes upon the ground;
Then, as if starting at her long delay,
Light as a fawn along the mead may bound,
Tracing the shady path, with graceful steps she wound.

XXXV.

Twere long to tell how oft that vision rose
Upon his dreamy spirit, while in vain,
With longing heart that never knew repose,
He sought to gaze on that bright form again:
'Twere long to tell how many a plaintive strain
'Mid these lone wilds from his sad lips would fall;
To Nature only would he then complain;—
In after times to me he told it all,
And still such words as these my memory can recall.

"She beamed a moment on my sight—
A moment worth an age to me—
It was a vision pure and bright
As ever Fancy's eye might see.

"She vanished—and my spirit felt
As if a glorious light were gone;
It seemed as darkness round me dwelt,
When on me she no longer shone.

"Long years have passed; and yet my dreams
With that sweet vision still are fraught;
Still shine upon my heart the beams
Of that bright eye which then I caught.

"And vainly have my longing eyes
Sought her 'mong forms of mortal birth;—
Sure 't was some inmate of the skies
Who but a moment dwelt on earth!"

XXXVI.

At last—oh rapturous hour! they met; and Heaven,
Methinks, for this high end ordained it so,
That to his doating heart might thus be given
Its utmost wish, and he at length might know
All that a kindred spirit can bestow,
That, when that reed on which he leant should break,
His spirit might be weaned from all below,
And cling with grateful trust, which nought could shake,
To Him who said, "I ne'er will leave you nor forsake."

XXXVII.

Oh! I have marked how down his pale cheek rolled
A tear of humble penitence, no less
Than grief for the departed, while he told
What visions of enduring blessedness
He cherished in the idolatrous excess
Of his heart's passionate love—unmixed with fear
Of coming woe. Such love he would express
In rapturous song ; and she, well pleased, would hear,
While such soft strains as these he warbled in her ear:—

"My thoughts, my dreams are all of thee ;
Though absent still thou seemest near ;
Thine image everywhere I see ;
Thy voice in every breeze I hear.

"When softly o'er the evening sky
The stars come twinkling, one by one,
The star of Eve arrests mine eye,
As if it lit the heavens alone.

"So like its tranquil lustre seems
The light of that soft eye of thine ;—
That star of hope whose cheering beams
Upon my soul so sweetly shine.

"When o'er the placid lake I gaze,
That lies unruffled by the wind,
To me an image it displays
Of thy serene and pensive mind.

"The streams that wander glad and free,
And make sweet music as they flow,

Remind me of thine hours of glee,—
Thy playful arts to banish woe.

"Thy soul seems imaged in the hills
That stand unshaken by the blast
And hence the hope my bosom fills
Thou wilt be constant to the last.

"Whate'er in heaven or earth I see
That's pure or lovely, calm or bright,
Reminds me ever, love, of thee,
And brings thine image to my sight."

XXXVIII.

Nor was his doating fondness unreturned:
She he so loved ne'er gave him to deplore
Love cold or false. Like *his* her bosom yearned
For some congenial breast wherein to pour
The deep, warm feelings in her heart she bore.—
But why delay the sad event to tell?
Scarce was she his when Death, relentless, tore
That idol from his breast; and when it fell,
He felt his whole proud heart against the stroke rebel.

XXXIX.

And then the light of Heaven was all shut out.
From his imagined Deity he drew
No comfort and no peace; and hence his doubt
To impious hate and dark rejection grew.
The inward strife his tottering strength o'erthrew.
He pined away; and grief and wild despair
Had turned his brain—but that, at last, he flew
To his sweet sister's tender breast, and there
Poured forth the woes he could no more in secret bear.

XL.

She, like a fair plant, 'neath the fostering care
Of a loved mother in her youth had grown;
Nor scorching suns nor Winter's chilling air
Her tender mind's incipient growth had known.
Secure beneath the shelter round her thrown
By that o'ershadowing tree, the budding flowers
Of her expanding soul had sweetly blown,
Ere yet *his* infant mind's half conscious powers
Had opened to this world—its sunshine and its showers.

XLI.

But even while yet in her young mind the first
Fair blossoms in their loveliness were blowing,—
In fresh and blooming beauty as they burst
From the green bud, a cheering promise showing
Of more luxuriant beauty,—and were throwing
Sweet odours on the air as sweet as might be,
Even then was death's insidious poison flowing
Into the sap of that fair parent tree,
Her offspring's lovelier growth by Heaven denied to see.

XLII.

But yet a tender recollection dwelt
With her of one who o'er her slumbers hung,
Like a protecting spirit;—one who knelt
Beside her couch, and prayed for her, and sung
Sweet songs to lull her, or to mould her young
And tender mind to pure and holy feeling;
Silvery and soft the tones were of her tongue,
Her every look a heavenly mind revealing,
Which purest shone when, rapt in prayer, beside her
kneeling.

XLIII.

And these blest lessons of her early youth,
Deep in her pensive bosom still abiding,
Had ruled her spirit with the power of Truth;
And o'er the councils of her soul presiding,
Had sat like faithful monitors, whose chiding
Rebuked her wanderings when she went astray;
And whose calm voice, her gentle footsteps guiding,
Had led her with the just in that bright way
Which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

XLIV.

Meet breast was hers whereon, when faint and failing,
The wounded soul might lean to find repose.
No empty words of comfort unavailing
Breathed her soft lips to heal a brother's woes:
She knew that not as this vain world bestows
He gives, who left his own the rich bequest
Of peace, and from whose lips the assurance flows,
"Come unto me, and I will give you rest,
Ye of the weary heart, and heavy laden breast."

XLV.

To all his tale with patient ear she listened,—
A weary tale of wandering and of woe;
And in her eye a starting tear-drop glistened,
Which Hope and joyful Faith forbade to flow;
For well she knew, and she rejoiced to know,
That, watered by sweet influence from the skies,
The plants of grace with firmest root will grow
In contrite spirits, nor will God despise
The broken heart—to Him a pleasing sacrifice.

XLVI.

Therefore she sought not with such soothing balm
As Earth affords, his bleeding heart to heal;
With no weak solace did she strive to calm
The fears and griefs he could no more conceal:
She bade him not with cold indifference steel
His breast against the darts which anguish shod.
She knew that he did well to own and feel
The power of the Almighty's chastening rod,
"Humbling himself beneath the mighty hand of God."

XLVII.

But, stricken as he was, and inly bleeding
With wounds too deep for human skill or care,
She pointed to the Cross; and, thither leading,
She bade him fix his eye intently there
On Him who all our sins and sorrows bare
In his own body on the accursed tree,
And there was lifted up, that whosoe'er
Should look to Him in faith might straightway be,
By that confiding look, from death and sin set free.

XLVIII.

And, gazing on the Cross, she bade him mark
In what harmonious union there displayed
Truth met with Mercy, and whate'er was dark
And awful in pure Deity, arrayed
In the dread robes of judgment, here was made
To yield strong consolation to the heart
That there has fled for refuge, and is staid
On Him whose will nor death nor hell shall thwart—
Whose covenant still shall stand although the hill depart.

XLIX.

'"Good is the Lord, dear brother," thus he spoke,—
"You own Him good, but yet you question why
His creatures still are bowed beneath the yoke
Of sin or suffering.—Lift your downcast eye,
And see what He hath done that they who lie
Sunk in that cruel bondage might receive
A glorious freedom. He who dwelt on high
Hath here poured forth His life's blood to achieve
Victory o'er Death for all who on His name believe.

L.

"Just is our God,—you would believe him just—
'But wherefore then forbears His vengeful hand
To strike his rebel creatures to the dust,
Since all have dared His holy will withstand?'—
Behold the worst that Justice can demand
Poured on the guiltless head of Him who bore
His people's sins away into a land
Of deep forgetfulness—to rise no more
In judgment against those who now these sins deplore.

LI.

"Wherefore no condemnation now remains,—
No blighting curse, for them:—but if they bear—
And not unmoved—a weight of woes and pains,
In these they see a Father's tender care,
Who, though the chastening rod He will not spare,
Afflicts them but in faithfulness and love,
That they His perfect holiness may share,
And grow in meetness for their home above,
As onward to that home with patient steps they move.'

LII.

Thus, not in vain—for not unblessed—she strove
To calm his troubled spirit; thus she sought
To woo him to the Saviour, and remove
Each guilty fear and dark, distrustful thought.
And, while his wandering footsteps thus she brought
To the one source of comfort and of joy,
The feelings, too, wherewith his breast was fraught—
The fancies he had cherished from a boy,
All to the same high end she taught him to employ.

LIII.

And, as they roved together, oft she took
The volume he had read—but ne'er aright,—
'Even Nature's lovely and familiar book;
And, casting on it Revelation's light,
She showed how weak is man's unaided sight—
How impotent all Nature's boasted powers,
To scan the secret of that withering blight
Which Sin hath cast o'er all this world of ours,
Or chase away the gloom which round us darkly lowers.

LIV

Yet would she show that when aright we read
The book of Nature, by the heavenly aid
Of God's own Word and Spirit, it may lead
Our thoughts—not up to Him alone who made
That wondrous frame, and hath therein displayed
His might and wisdom—but to Him who came
In human likeness, and for us obeyed
The Law, and satisfied its utmost claim,
That from its curse we might find refuge in His name.

LV.

"'Twas well," she said, "dear brother, that thine eye
Should roam through the bright realms of boundless
space;
And in the glories of the midnight sky,
And in this lovely Earth, should seek to trace
The attributes of Him whose unveiled face
Man cannot see and live: but not alone
Of power and skill, but of redeeming *grace*
Doth Nature speak, when to our soul 'tis shown
Wherefore she seems 'in pain to travail and to groan.'

LVI.

"Yes, when the Christian stands and looks around
Upon this fair creation, for his sake
Cursed of its Maker, then each mournful sound
And scene of desolation can awake
Deep musings; for it seems as if they spake
With sympathetic voice; and in the throes
Of Nature's breast, she seems but to partake
Our sufferings here—our pains, and toils, and woes—
Our longings for the time when this dark scene shall
close.

LVII.

"The sweeping blasts that o'er the desert howl,—
The winds that through the leafless forest sigh,—
The drifting clouds that in the tempest scowl,
And hide the brightness of the glowing sky,—
The barren wilderness, all bare and dry,—
The shriek of birds around their rifled nest,—
All dismal sounds—all sights that pain the eye,
Are but the groans of Nature's heaving breast,—
The unseemly scars which still her unhealed wounds
attest.

LVIII.

"Yet 'mid her sufferings there is still a song,—
'A song as in the night,' * when they who keep
Some holy, high solemnity, prolong
Their watch till morn; and now they raise the deep
Sad plaint of mourning—and anon they sweep
The harp with joyous hand, and tell aloud
That 'they who sow in tears, in joy shall reap,'
And that though darkness for a while enshroud
All heaven and earth, morn comes to banish every cloud.

LIX.

"Yes, every cheerful sound—the voice of birds—
Of gentle streams and winds, and every sight
That glads the eye of man—all these have words
That speak of hope to him who knows aright
Their meaning: for they tell that, though a blight
Still, for man's sin, upon this Earth remain,
Yet it is not of Heaven abandoned quite,
But rests in hope † to be restored again
When they who suffer now with Christ, with Christ shall reign.

LX.

"For say, why is it that albeit so much
Now mars the beauty wherewith Earth was crowned
In its first state, and speaks the blighting touch
Of that dread curse which came upon the ground
When man rebelled,—albeit that, all around,
Discordant elements for ever rage
Where once was nought but peace,—there yet is found
So much that may the admiring eye engage,
Though little but the wreck of a more glorious age?

* "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept," &c.—Isaiah xxx. 29.

† "The creature hath been made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in *hope*," &c —Rom. viii. 20.

LXI.

"Why is it that this sin-polluted world
From its just doom so long a respite knows?
Why is it that it hath not yet been hurled
Back to the depths of darkness whence it rose?
Why tarries still God's vengeance on His foes,
And spares a world that 'gainst his will rebels?
Why is there aught but deaths and pangs and woes
Where Sin, the mother of Destruction, dwells,
And sends her horrid brood forth from a thousand cells?

LXII.

"Why is it, but that He whose word called forth
The worlds from nothingness, and who bestowed
On our first parents this most lovely Earth,—
For innocence and peace a fit abode,
And bade them live for Him to whom they owed
That glorious gift, and use it to his praise,
Hath taken on Himself the mighty load
Of guilt that had o'erwhelmed us, and so stays
God's vengeful hand, and bids His seed 'prolong their days.'*

LXIII.

"Prolong their days!—and to what end? to whom
Shall they devote the lives so dearly bought
But unto Him who chased away the gloom
Their mad rebellion on the world had brought?
And, as the glories wherewith Earth was fraught
In its first state proclaimed a Maker's love,
So by its tarnished splendours are we taught
To look to Him who sits enthroned above,
With blood-bought power the curse for ever to remove.

* "He shall see his seed, He shall prolong *their* days." This seems the right rendering of Isaiah liii. 10.

LXIV.

"And is not all that we on earth survey,—
Are not all lovely forms that glad our eye,
(Each in itself still hastening to decay,
Yet still renewed by influence from on high)—
Ordained of heaven some lesson to supply?
Or is it, think ye, but blind Nature's power,—
By infidels adored—that from the sky
Sends down the summer dew—the vernal shower,
To cheer the thirsty field and raise the drooping flower!

LXV.

"See ye not, in that genial influence
Poured from on high, a type by Heaven designed
To figure forth unto the eye of sense
The Spirit's quickening power? and when we find
In the soft breathings of the viewless wind,
And in its rushing sweep, an emblem meet
Of his deep working, is it but the *mind*
Whose fruitful fancy frames such fond conceit,
Deeming all Nature's forms with meaning thus replete?

LXVI.

"No, better is the creed that He who blessed
That fair creation which his hands had made
Lovely and pure as man's untainted breast,
And all his habitation then arrayed
With beauty, stainless, and not formed to fade,
In mercy for man's sake this Earth hath cursed,
That 'mid the tokens all around displayed
Of some dire change from what He formed it first,
Our sickly souls might for a better state be nursed,—

LXVII.

"Kept ever in remembrance that on Earth
Is nought abiding—passing all away;—
That now in every thing of Earthly birth
The seeds are sown of sickness and decay;—
That flesh, like grass, resolves itself to clay
And worse corruptions in man's spirit reign;
Nor is there aught exempt from Death's dark sway
Save where the Spirit breathes upon the slain,
And calls the whitening bones to a new life again.

LXVIII.

"Go forth, then, still, my brother, as of old,
Through Nature's glorious Temple. Let the Word
Be thine interpreter, and 't will unfold
Deep mysteries there; and while its light is poured
On all you see, 't will show that Temple stored
With emblems—types of heavenly things, which speak
Of the rich grace and mercy of the Lord,
And point to where the soul, diseased and weak,
With sure and joyful hope for strength and peace may seek."

LXIX.

'T was thus that o'er the path he loved to tread
Her gentle steps went with him. Thus she drew
His heart by sympathy's strong bonds, and spread
The scenes of Nature open to his view
Illumed by light so pure, and yet so new,
That in his humbled heart a deeper love
At once to God, to Man, to Nature grew;
And with more earnest spirit now he strove
To link with all below high thoughts of Heaven above.

LXX.

And not alone o'er Nature's realms was shed
The light thus newly dawning on his mind;
It chased away the gloom that once o'erspread
The ways of Providence; and bade him find
Even in the woes whereat he late repined
The tokens of a Heavenly Father's care.
And now, with spirit tranquil and resigned,
He mused on scenes which late he strove to tear
From Memory's book, but found too deeply graven there.

LXXI.

Still to his loved and lost one, and to all
That spake of her, his heart would fondly cling.
Dear were the strains, though sad, that could recall
Her image. Oft he sat mute listening
To hear his sister strike the harp and sing
Some song that dear one loved in days gone by;
And ere she ceased to kiss the trembling string
With her light fingers, he, with pensive sigh,
Would thus himself prolong the same sweet melody.

Touch, gently, gently touch again
The harp o'er which thy fingers stray;
And bid that once familiar strain
Wake thoughts of many a bygone day.

For I have heard that tender lay
From lips I hung upon in love,
The lips of her who fled away
To join the sainted choirs above.

And every time I hear that strain
Warbled as it hath been by thee,
I seem to hear her voice again.
Her very form I seem to see.

My thoughts are wafted back to years
Of varied hue with her I spent;
And joy is mingled with the tears
In which my musing soul has vent.

And then my spirit longs to fly
Away to her, and taste the joys
Which spirits know beyond the sky,—
That bliss which grief no more alloys.

LXXII.

Nor long did Heaven the wished-for time delay.
And sweet it was to mark him as he grew
In ripeness for his change. For, day by day,
His thoughts and feelings caught a heavenlier hue
As coming glories brightened on his view.
Nor was his converse to our souls unblessed;
Oft, as to that long home he nearer drew
Where now these dear ones all together rest,
He breathed, in words like these, the feelings of his breast.

A heavenly voice is falling
Upon my silent heart;
I hear it softly calling
My spirit to depart.

With tottering footsteps wending
Along a rugged path,
I feel I am descending
Into the vale of death.

Yet, its dark precincts treading,
Feeling its gloom so near,
I enter it undreading,
For, wherefore should I fear?

That Shepherd is beside me
  To guard me and to cheer,
Who, wont through life to guide me,
  Has brought me safely here.

Then let me still, as slowly
  I tread this region dim,
Breathe through my heart a holy,
  A deep and silent hymn.

Soon, soon shall it be given
  This feeble voice of mine,
With all the choir of Heaven,
  To raise a song divine;

In one full chorus pouring
  The everlasting strain;
With grateful joy adoring
  The lamb that once was slain.

And, even while yet I 'm numbered
  With those who dwell below,
With mortal flesh encumbered
  Amid a world of woe,

May not this heart be sweetly
  Attuned by God's own hand
To join, and not unmeetly,
  With that rejoicing band;

Its deep tones humbly blending
  With that celestial song,
Whose strains of joy unending
  In Heaven it shall prolong?

MENIE.

A BALLAD.

" My Menie, in thy early days,
Thou aye wast full of glee;
And in this warld o' cares and waes
Thou wast a joy to me.

" And what is 't, lass, that ails ye now?
There's something grieves ye, sure,
That gies ye sic a thoughtfu' brow,
And maks ye sae demure.

" My ain dear Menie, tell to me,
What gars ye look sae wae;
For oh! I canna bide to see
My lassie pining sae."

" Ay, mither, blythesome I ha'e been;
But blythe I'll be nae mair:
For a' the joys that I hae seen,
I now maun dree despair.

" Oh, weel I ken, my mither dear,
Your heart can feel for me,—
Feel for the pangs o' hope that sear,
And love that canna dee.

"I need na' tell to you how hard
Frae ane's fond love to part:
I need na' tell how hope deferr'd
Brings sickness to the heart:

"But, oh! you canna ken how cauld
And witherin' is the blight,
When the last hope that could uphauld
Has vanished frae the sight.

"And oh! what hope can now remain
For me, this side o' death,
Since he who vowed to be my ain
Has broke his plighted faith?

"When to misfortune's heavy hand
We were constrained to yield,
And left our bein, auld house and land
For this bit scanty beld.

"When Willie's father looked wi' scorn
On ane sae scant o' gear,
And strove his heart frae me to turn
By artfu' hint and sneer;

"When we that had together played
In childhood's happy days,
And aft at eve together strayed
O'er blooming banks and braes,

"Were watched wi' keen and jealous eye,
Lest we should chance to meet,—
Forbid, though ah, how fruitlessly!
Each other's converse sweet,—

"Still, still did happiness unite
Wi' love's eternal flame:
The more 'twas sought to quench their light
The stronger it became.

"Even when his father's cruel pride
To part us had prevailed,—
When far across the western tide
With sorrowing heart he sailed,—

"Still, still, did hope support my soul,
And in our parting hour,
The force of grief I could control
By that delightful power.

"I felt that nought could quench the flame
Of love wi' which I loved;
And thought he aye maun bide the same,
Though far frae me removed.

"But, though long, weary months flew by,
Nae word frae Willie came;
Nor e'er frae human lips did I
Hear mention o' his name.

"And I began, aye, mair and mair,
A' hope and joy to tyne;
And it's nae wonder cauld despair
At last should gar me pine.

"And aft I've sat in weariness,
Alone frae morn till e'en
And naething seen but dreariness
Spread o'er life's future scene.

"And yet at times a sudden gleam,
O' hope would cheer my heart;
And gladness wi' a fitfu' beam,
Across my soul would dart.

"I thought that yet the time might come,
That should our bliss restore,—
When Willie's should be Menie's home,
And we should part no more;

"When on those griefs we should look back,
That once so sore distressed:
As travellers on a rugged track
That brought them to their rest.

"But oh! nae blink o' joy shall shine
Upon my sorrows mair;
The portion that shall now be mine
Is anguish and despair.

"Long did I strive against the thought
That it could ever be,
That my ain Willie could be brought
To prove sae fause to me:

"But oh! the hope I leant on now
Has proved a broken reed;
For Willie has forgot his vow,
And he is fause indeed."

"Ay, Menie dear, wi' earthly joys,
Sair, sair, it is to part,—
Sair when the hand of God destroys
An idol of the heart.

"But mind, when joys and hopes sae dear
Frae our fond hearts are riven;
'Tis that they may be brought mair near,
And closer up to heaven.

"O then, dear Menie, dinna let
Sair grief afflict your mind;
And if ye never can forget,
O seek to be resigned."

"Forsaken by the ane mair dear
Than a' the warld beside;
Still mind there Ane that's ever near,
And mair in Him confide."

* * * * *

Months more of dark and hopeless woe,
O'er Menie's head have passed;
And now the withering flower may show,
How keen has been the blast.

Now pale she sits, her soft blue eyes
Watching the sun's last rays;
And thoughts within her soul arise
Of bygone, happy days.

She sees a stranger's form brush past!
She hears a stranger's feet!
With wild emotions, high and fast,
Her breast begins to beat.

Whose step is at the cottage door?
Whose voice is that she hears?
That voice she oft has heard before,
'Tis music to her ears!

'Tis he! her loved one! Oh! too deep
For her weak frame to bear,
This flood of bliss that comes to sweep
Away her dark despair!

With face bright beaming with delight
He hastes to clasp the maid;
But, ah! how starts he at the sight
Which there he sees displayed!

There pale and motionless she lies,
And seems as if 't were death
That closed those lovely lips and eyes,
And stopped her struggling breath.

Distraction in his face appears,
And tells the inward storm,
And in distress too deep for tears
He gazes on her form.

To raise her child to life again
Each art the mother tries;
O'erjoyed he sees 'tis not in vain,
She opens wide her eyes.

At first in vacancy they swim,
As waking from a dream,
But now, intently fixed on him,
With calm delight they beam.

Grief from her soul has fled away,
And hope and joy arise,
Re-kindled by the gladdening ray
Of love from Willie's eyes.

It needs not words to her to tell
  That Willie's heart is true;
She reads it in his face full well,
  Bright beaming to her view.

With ecstasy her bosom glows,
  Now locked in his embrace;
And blooms again the faded rose,
  That long had fled her face.

Her cheek, no more of ghastly white,
  The purest colour dyes,
And heavenly loveliness and light
  Are beaming from her eyes.

"O dear, dear Willie," thus she spoke,
  "Fause tongues have wronged ye sair;
But, oh! the weak heart that they broke,
  Itsel' has wronged ye mair.

"They said that you, in yon far land
  Across the Western tide,
Had sought and won another's hand,
  And she was now your bride.

"And I—O trustless heart, to think
  That it could e'er be true!
Began in dark despair to sink
  The mair I thought on you."

"Yes, black the heart and false the tongue
  That thus could speak," he cried;
"Oh, foully have they done me wrong,
  And basely have they lied!

"Though tossed upon the world's wide sea,
This heart still turned to home,
Still, Menie, pointed it to thee
Wherever I might roam.

"And now I thought my sorrows o'er,
And all my wanderings done,
And I have sought my native shore
To clasp my faithful one."

Thus they embraced in joy again;
But ah! mysterious Heaven!
On Earth his Menie to detain
Too late this bliss was given.

He saw her hastening, day by day,
To her eternal rest,
Yet treading joyfully the way
By resignation blessed.

And oft he sat at her bedside
With looks of utter woe,
And down his cheeks a whelming tide
Of burning tears would flow.

There once he sat as the bright sun
Behind the mountain set;
And bygone days he thought upon
With anguish and regret.

Upon that happy time he thought,
When Menie's face of mirth
More light to his glad spirit brought
Than yon sun brought to earth.

And now he saw her vanishing
For ever from his sight,
And what now to his soul could bring
Its wonted joy and light?

He gazed upon her faded cheek,—
Her cheek so pale and mild;
His sad heart was too full to speak,
But thus she spake and smiled.

"Dear Willie, why sae sairly grieve,
And look sae wae on me?
What gars thee choking sighs to heave,
And tears start in your e'e?

"Is't that ye see this wastin' form
Melt like the drifted snaw,—
This heart, that braved the roughest storm,
Sink in the calm awa'?

"Is't that ye see this frame, that bore
Fu' mony a wintry blast,
Now, seared and blighted in the core,
Witherin' awa' at last?

"Is't that a sair and throbbin' storm
Gaes through your sinkin' heart,
And something tells ye that fu' soon
We maun for ever part?

"And think ye, Willie, when I'm gane,—
Gane to my home above,
That ye'll be left on earth alane,—
Robbed o' your only love.

"O mind there's Ane that's luvit you
Wi' love mair strong than mine,
For oh! what love sae strong and true
As Jesus' love divine?

"Keep close to Him; to Him gie up
The keepin' of your heart,
And He will bless this bitter cup,
And heal your bosom's smart.

"Through Him alone may you sustain
The weight of crushing grief;
He only to affliction's pain
May bring a sure relief.

"O weel I ken what you maun feel
When we at last maun part;
O weel I ken how ill to heal
That anguish o' the heart.

"When severed frae a dear loved one,
Though by a hand divine,
O weel I ken the heart is prone
To murmur and repine.

"For what is't but the bitter thought
That we for aye had parted,
That down to this my strength has brought,
And made me broken-hearted?

"And oh! what tongue can ever tell
How I hae luvit thee!
Oh! I hae thought no' heaven itsel'
Without thee bliss could be.

"But in the boundless grace of Heaven,
  Even while I thus repined,
A ray of hope by God was given
  To cheer my darkened mind.

"And oh! how wondrous is that grace!
  And oh! that hope how sweet,
That soon in one prepared place
  We twa again shall meet!

"Yes! though I gang awhile before,
  You too will follow soon,
And care and grief will a' be o'er
  When we are met abune.

"There's something tells me, Willie dear,—
  I kenna how it is,—
There's something says the time draws near
  When we shall meet in bliss.

"It's may be that your clear blue e'e,
  And pale cheek gar me think,
That 'neath your sorrows you, like me,
  At last fu' soon maun sink.

"But, Willie, yet I may be wrang;
  Its God's to tak or spare,
And He on earth may keep ye lang,
  To glorify Him there.

"But be it soon, or be it late,
  'T will be when He kens best;
It's no the dart o' chance or fate
  That then will pierce your breast.

"Then rest ye still, content to be,
And bear what He may will;
And if ye live, or if ye dee,
Gie Him the glory still."

Thus ere her soul this earthly scene
For brighter realms forsook,
Together pensively serene,
Sweet counsel oft they took.

To sanctify affliction's smart,
As well as heal she strove;
And all the balm she brought his heart
Was gathered from above.

And as from her dear lips it flowed
Peace o'er his spirit stole,
And sweetest comfort was bestowed
Upon his anguished soul.

She seemed a being from above
Who here awhile had dwelt,
And reverence mingled with the love
That then for her he felt.

But death would not be stayed, and fast
He saw her strength decay:
And soon, all ills and sorrows past,
From Earth she winged her way.

In mansions far beyond the skies
Her soul is with her God;
In yon kirkyard her body lies,
Beneath the grassy sod.

And to that hallowed spot full oft,
  Her Willie comes at even,
And thence his soul is borne aloft
  To meet with hers in Heaven.

And every time that there he kneels,
  His Maker to adore,
His earthly house of clay he feels
  Dissolving more and more.

And patiently he waits the day
  That sets his spirit free;
Unto the land of rest away,
  Even like a dove to flee.

And the glad thought upon him swells,
  A place shall then be his,
Where his beloved Redeemer dwells,
  And where his Menie is.

TO A MOUNTAIN STREAM

AMONG THE OCHILLS.

PURE flowing and rejoicing stream!
How oft, in childhood's happy dream,
I 've wished or fancied that like thee
The current of my life might be;
Through scenes of beauty ever straying,
Each wayward impulse still obeying,
And oft in lovely spots delaying,
Till, sudden urged by such desire
As playful Fancy might inspire,
Away to other scenes it passed,
While each seemed lovelier than the last.

Far up among the mountains wild
I 've loved to wander, when a child,
To mark the region of thy birth,
Where, from the womb of Mother Earth,
Instinct with life, I saw thee gushing,
And down amid the valleys rushing.
At first, a little trickling rill,
I saw thee wander at thy will,
Scarce heeding what thy path might be,
If 't were but unconstrained and free.

I saw thee in thy onward course
From all around thee gaining force.
I saw the Earth, I saw the Sky,
To thee new energy supply.
Imbued by these with conscious strength,
I saw thee burst away at length,
And, proudly spurning all control,
Adown the hills impetuous roll.

Even when stern Winter's icy chain
Bound all the rivers of the plain,
I saw it strive, but strive in vain,
Thy restless wanderings to restrain.
And when the gentle voice of Spring
  Was softly breathing o'er the Earth,
And filling every living thing
  With new delight and lively mirth ;—
When many a glad and tuneful bird,
  Called forth by it on joyous wing,
Amid the o'erhanging woods was heard
  Its song of grateful praise to sing ;—
When from the clear and placid heaven
  A stream of joy appeared to flow,
By whose enlivening touch was given
  New life to every thing below,—
At times I saw thee gently wending,
Where birch and willow, o'er thee bending,
And flowers, their gentle heads depending,
  Shed o'er thy pure and tranquil breast
Their hues, with heaven's clear azure blending,
  And calm thy waters seemed to rest,

As if unwilling to forsake
  Their sweet companions smiling found,
Or loath the pleasing charm to break
  Whose magic there thy current bound.
Anon I saw thee burst away,
As if thou might'st no more delay;
I saw thee onward gaily dashing,
Thy glad waves in the sunbeam flashing;
I saw the cheerful smile they cast
On every lovely flower they passed,
Which nodded back, as on they rushed,
Or bowed its gentle head, and blushed.
I heard the woods around thee ringing,
With thy glad laughter and thy singing;
And then my heart leapt up with glee,
In joyful sympathy with thee!
Like thee, I wished to me 'twere given,
Beneath the smiling cope of heaven
To roam, restrained by no dull bound,
With none but Nature's children round,—
And these all free and glad and gay
As I myself the livelong day,
And ever, as I roamed along,
To pour my cheerful soul in song,
Joining the strain of grateful mirth
That seemed to rise from all the Earth.

But different now my hopes from these;
Serener joys my spirit please;
Like some calm river, broad and deep,
I would my stream of life might sweep,
Even such a course would I pursue
As thine, majestic Avon Dhu,

Whose distant waters, bright and blue,
Gleam o'er the scene which now I view,
Cheering the vale thou windest through;—
Bidding the smiling banks around
With plenty and with joy abound;—
A cheering influence round them pouring,
The scorched and drooping flowers restoring,
And keeping all the lovely scene
Through which they flow, so fresh and green.
How sweet methinks if thus 't were given
The current of my life to flow!
If thus, in the pure light of heaven,
My bosom, calm as thine, might glow!
If comfort thus it might bestow
On many a wearied soul below,
When worn by care or sunk in woe!—
If, even while rapt in heavenly dreams,
Absorbed in sweet and holy musing,
My soul, poured forth in tuneful streams,
Refreshing waters round diffusing,
A soothing solace might impart
To the disconsolate in heart;
Or foster the young flowers of Earth,
And call their lovely blossoms forth,
And, while the light of Heavenly Love
Poured down upon them from above,
Bid them their earliest bloom expand
To greet that influence pure and bland!

Yet not in vain our thoughts are borne
Back to our life's delightful morn,
Recalling all those visions bright
That rose before our infant sight,—

The aspirations pure and warm
That wont our simple hearts to charm,—
The joys with which our spirit thrilled,
The feeling that our bosom filled,
By Nature's gentle voice instilled;
And all the hopes we loved to cherish,
Though doomed, perhaps, too soon to perish.

And not in vain our steps retrace,
In riper years, each well-known place,
Each lovely haunt—each calm retreat,
Where fancy led our youthful feet,—
Where first we held communion sweet
With Nature, and her forms impressed
Upon our warm and yielding breast
Those images of loveliness,
  Which still, in many an after year,
Beam on our hearts with power to bless,
  And, even in hours of gloom, to cheer;—
Where our young, tender spirits first,
In Nature's kindly bosom nursed,
From her sweet inspiration drew,
  Reclining in her gentle arms,
And that deep love and reverence knew
For her, which ever deeper grew,
And, though a while we bade adieu
  To her inspiring charms,
Springs up within our soul anew,
Whene'er her face again we view.

Ah! yes, we feel 'tis ne'er in vain
We tread these lovely scenes again!
For, even as yon "abounding river"
  Which in the glimmering distance gleams,

Pouring its cheerful flood for ever,
Fed by a thousand hill-born streams,—
When Summer's hot and sultry suns
Have robbed it of its wonted force,
And lessening, now, its current runs
Along its half-deserted course,—
As then its strength is oft renewed
By pure and copious waters, sent
From forth those regions, grandly rude,
Wherein its infancy was spent;
So, when the current of our soul
Has sunk beneath some parching drought,
And languidly begins to roll
The tide of feeling and of thought,
Our heart a grateful impulse feels
Amid the scenes we early loved,
And o'er our soul new vigour steals,
When wandering where our youth had roved.
The simple joys that then we knew,
The feelings all to nature true,
Fall on our breast like vernal dew
Upon a drooping flower;
The springs from whence our childhood drew
The freshness of the heart renew,
And all our souls again imbue
With more than wonted power.

THE COMMUNION OF HEARTS.

COMPOSED DURING A SOLITARY RAMBLE IN THE HIGHLANDS

In solitude 't is sweet to stray,
And muse o'er some familiar scene,—
Familiar in life's early day,
When hopes and joys were fresh and green;

Where every sight and every sound
Awakes old feelings in the mind;
And dear associations round
Whate'er we gaze on are entwined:

Where every sighing breeze appears
To speak in a familiar tone,
And every streamlet charms our ears
With songs our infancy had known.

And sweet it is when on our gaze
Those scenes—so oft imagined—burst,
Wherein the happy infant days
Of those we deeply love were nursed.

Where we may feel as they have felt,
And every influence they have known
Upon our soul may softly melt,
And mould it to a kindred tone.

Their absent form we seem to see,
Their voice makes music in the air,
Their joyous, artless infancy
Even now seems gaily sporting there.

But, wandering, lone, o'er some fair scene,—
Mute gazing o'er some bright expanse,
Where those we love have never been,
Or have but cast a passing glance;

Though every beauty there be found
To charm our fixed and musing eyes,
Though on that "rich historic ground"
All bright associations rise;

If there be nothing there that speaks
Unto our hearts in friendship's tone,
If vainly there Affection seeks
For something it may call its own;

How bright soe'er the prospect, still
Its glories are but half enjoyed,
And still our spirit feels a chill,
A dreary and a craving void.

Though not with sweeter influence roll
The softest sounds upon my sense
Than comes the music on my soul
Of Nature's silent eloquence;

Though deeper joy my heart hath known
When gazing from some mountain height,
Or pensive wandering all alone,
Than scenes of festive mirth excite

Yet sweet it is to feel and know
  That there is one congenial breast
Wherein the same emotions glow,
  Deep, strong, and pure, though unexpressed;

To read a kindred, calm delight,
  Within some dear one's musing eye,
Mild beaming forth, serenely bright
  As Evening's soft and pensive sky.

Then, while our hearts within us thrill
  With love to that Almighty One
Whose goodness and whose glory fill
  And brighten all we gaze upon;

How doubly sacred, then, appear
  The ties by which we feel allied
To that dear one—now doubly dear—
  Who stands deep musing by our side!

For then we feel how true it is—
  In what a glorious sense 't is true—
That we are children both of His
  Who spread these glories to our view;

That, on our souls by Him impressed,
  His image is not yet so dim
But still we feel supremely blest
  In viewing all that speaks of Him:—

Say, rather, that His image bright
  Hath on our souls been so renewed,
That *there* to gaze we most delight
  Where pure that image may be viewed.

As brethren on a foreign shore,
  Where long their absent steps have roved,
Together mutely musing o'er
  A father's pictured form beloved;

When on them seems serenely bent
  That father's mildly beaming eye,
Where anxious care is sweetly blent
  With that deep love which cannot die;

While, gazing on that placid face,
  Upon their thoughtful spirit throngs
Each moral charm, each mental grace,
  That to that father's soul belongs;

While those dear eyes and lips recall
  The looks—the words—the tones that shed
The light and warmth of love o'er all,
  And round the hearth such gladness spread;

While melting thoughts of bygone years
  Upon their spirits softly come,
With all that brightens and endears
  The memory of their childhood's home;

And while within their bosoms burn
  Deep longings for that hour of joy
When to that home they shall return,
  And taste its bliss without alloy;

As then more closely still they cling,
  In that strange land, to one another,
And doubly feel how sweet a thing
  The fond affection of a brother;

So, pilgrims in this land of Life,
  Where few congenial hearts are found—
Where coldness, and deceit, and strife,
  And all the fruits of sin abound,—

When, as in pensive mood we stray
  With one who to our heart is dear,
We pause together to survey
  A scene like that I gaze on here,

Our warm imagination deems
  That from that pure and placid sky
On us, His lowly children, beams
  Our Heavenly Father's tender eye.

Where'er we turn we seem to trace,
  In Earth below and Heaven above,
The image of His glorious face,
  All radiant with the smiles of love.

And then how closely linked we feel
  To one who those emotions shares
Of filial love, which best reveal
  How much his heart that image bears!

Then, though, perhaps, our lips refrain
  To break the silence brooding round,
It seems as some electric chain
  Our souls in mystic union bound.

And, oh! the consciousness how sweet,
  While rapt in thoughts no words could tell,
That still our hearts accordant beat,
  And with congenial feelings swell;—

Feelings, whose current, deep and strong,
  Sprung from one heavenly fountain, rolls
Its ever-circling stream along,—
  The life's blood of our kindred souls;

Which, there in purity renewed,
  The taint of earth from off it throws,
And, with new life and warmth imbued,
  Deep through our thrilling bosom flows.

It seems as if a purer air
  Than that of this polluted earth
Were poured around our spirits there,
  To nourish thoughts of heavenly birth:

And thence upon our breast descends
  A sweet and holy influence,
That with our very being blends
  And purifies the soul from sense.

But, even though, poured from all around,
  The streams of Nature's music roll,
Unmarred by any jarring sound,
  Through the deep windings of our soul;

Though all around be fair and bright,
  And all within us be serene;
And calm our heart reflect the light
  That gilds and gladdens all the scene;

Still, if we share these cheering beams
  With no fond breast of kindred mould,
A something o'er our spirit seems
  To cast a shadow dull and cold.

And, oh! if even that placid hour—,
  That lovely scene—these glowing skies—
If even these should have a power
  To bid conflicting thoughts arise;

If that serenely parting sun
  Upon our musing soul should pour
Sad thoughts of some beloved one,
  Who now is seen on earth no more;

If even the gladness and the peace
  That from such scenes are wont to flow,—
If even these should but increase
  The depth and bitterness of woe—

Recalling those past hours of bliss,
  When with that loved one oft we strayed
'Neath such a glorious sky as this,
  And such a lovely scene surveyed;

Then when we think that low is laid
  That heart which then so warmly beat—
So keenly felt that bliss, and made
  These joys to us so doubly sweet;

Oh, then, our spirit looks around
  For some soft sympathizing breast;
And feels a pang when none is found
  Whereon the sinking heart may rest.

THE MARTYRS OF THE ISLES.

Written on hearing of the persecution of the Protestants at Madeira, and particularly of the condemnation to death of Maria Joaquina, who still lies in prison under that sentence.

A VOICE comes o'er the waters!—a voice of thrilling
sound!
A voice of lamentation in louder praises drowned!
'Tis the voice of suffering nature 'neath dark oppres-
sion crushed;
'Tis the voice of praise to Him who bids the deep, low
plaint, be hushed.

With the souls beneath the altar now it cries, "O Lord,
how long?"
With the blest in glory now it joins the glad, triumph-
ant song—
The song of praise to Him who gives His saints that
fearless faith
Whereby they gain the victory o'er agony and death.

Whence comes that voice of wailing that floats along
the deep?
Whence come those hallelujahs that o'er the waters
sweep

Hath the lone sea a temple? and are there altars there
From whence the incense rises of a trusting people's prayer?

Yes, Ocean hath his altars; and afar upon the sea
Are those who put their confidence, O living God, in thee;
And Ocean hath his temples, and his priests prepared to give
Themselves a living sacrifice for Him in whom they live.

Where the great deep is heaving its billows dark and wild
Full many a rocky islet th' Almighty's hand hath piled:
By many an awful token there His power hath He displayed;
"The dwellers in the utmost parts" behold, and "are afraid."

Yet long the powers of darkness had held dominion there;
And rites of horrid cruelty polluted all the air;
And the cliffs that frown above them, and the waves that round them roll,
Spoke of wrath, and not of mercy, to the terror-stricken soul.

By the drear expanse of Ocean, that compassed them around,
They were severed from the Nations that knew the joyful sound;

And the winged winds swept o'er them, and the billows
lashed their shore,
But no tidings of salvation to these distant isles they
bore.

But the Lord had not forgotten them; his eye was on
them yet;
And the time had come to favour them, the time that
He had set;
And He sent from far his messengers,—His trusted
ones, to bear
The words of hope and comfort to these dwellings of
despair.

Then burst the song of praise from those who, washed
in Jesu's blood,
From darkness unto light were called,—from Satan's
power to God;
And, strengthened by victorious faith, with joyful voice
they cried,
"We will not fear what man can do; the Lord is on
our side."

But the startled powers of darkness with terror heard
the strain,
Like the trump of foes advancing to invade their
ancient reign;
And they summoned all their hosts around;—they bade
them rise and quell
The bands of those who dared against their tyrant sway
rebel.

They marked with dread the gallant ship as joyfully it bore
The herald of salvation to Erromanga's shore;
And they stirred their blinded minions from their ambush forth to rush,
And they thought with carnal weapons th' Almighty's cause to crush.

Vain thought!—despite of Earth and Hell shall stand the high decree,—
For Jehovah's voice hath spoken,—"The Isles shall wait on me:"
And the arm of flesh may wither, and dust return to dust,
But the Lord will keep his people there while "on His arm they trust."

O sweetly beamed the light of truth on Madagascar's isle;
And many a heart was gladdened by a Heavenly Father's smile;
And the Martyr's voice was joyful as he calmly sank to rest,
While the poison chilled his life's blood, or the spear transfixed his breast.

And sweetly did the hallowed voice of adoration swell
From the glad lips of the captive in Madeira's lonely cell;
For his trust was in the God of truth, whose "Word could not be bound,"
And he knew the seed his hand had sown was springing all around.

For the Lord's hand was not shortened, and it could
not be restrained;
And the light had beamed on many a soul where darkness late had reigned;
And what though bonds await them, if to Christ they
dare to flee?
Yet none of these things move them, for the Truth
hath made them free.

Yea, their life they count not dear to them, but calmly
wait the day
That calls them for their Lord's dear sake, if so He
wills, to lay
Their mortal bodies in the grave He robbed of all its
gloom,
When He burst its bonds and rose again His glory to
resume.

O, dark and drear He found it, when for us He laid Him
there;
And o'er it long had brooded the wings of black
Despair;
But full of light He left it, when the stone away was
rolled;
And the Angels watch beside it still who of His rising
told.

And as the two lov'd Marys, who on His cross had
gazed,
Came early to the tomb, from whence already he was
raised,
So now another Mary stands beside that tomb once
more,
Willing in death to follow Him, for her the cross who
bore.

And still the angels speak to her as on that morn they
spoke,
When from the slumbers of the tomb the Lord of life
awoke;
And now she sorrows not as those for Him who
"mourned and wept,"
For she knows that "Christ is risen, the first fruits of
those that slept."

Then hush the voice of wailing!—raise high the voice
of song,
Ye saints who out of weakness through faith have been
made strong!
Patient in tribulation, and calm in midst of strife,
Be faithful unto death, and yours shall be the crown of
life.

LINES TO G. S.

ON HIS DEPARTURE FOR INDIA, AS A MISSIONARY, JULY, 1840.

BROTHER, thou seek'st a distant field
To fight the battles of the Lord;
Go forth, then, boldly—faith thy shield,
The word of Truth thy sword.

Still be thy willing feet prepared
The Gospel sound of peace to spread:
Let Righteousness thy bosom guard,
Salvation crown thy head.

Though foes shall compass thee around,—
Foes oft unseen, yet fierce and strong,
And weak thy single arm be found
Against that mighty throng;

Yet all alone thou shalt not bear
The heat and burden of the day:
Amid the toils that wait thee there
The Lord shall be thy stay.

Thy Saviour, like a mighty Rock,
Shall shade thee in that weary land;
And ever, 'mid the battle's shock,
Shall be at thy right hand.

The Lord of Hosts himself shall be,
  Thy leader and thy constant guide;
To succour and to strengthen thee,
  For ever at thy side.

Amid thy foes he shall prepare
  A feast of soul-refreshing meat,
Whereof a faithful few shall share,
  And make it doubly sweet.

That little band shall bear a part
  In every care and every grief;
And, more than all, one *loving* heart
  Shall bring thy soul relief.

LINES TO G. B. S.

INSCRIBED ON A COPY OF POLLOK'S "COURSE OF TIME," PRESENTED TO HER ON HER MARRIAGE AND DEPARTURE FOR INDIA. JULY, 1840.

SISTER, though now in sweet and sacred union
We thus be linked together—but to part,
Ours may be still the deep and pure communion
Of soul with kindred soul, and heart with heart.

Still, o'er our musing spirits softly stealing,
In silent intercourse our thoughts may flow;
And still with deep and sympathetic feeling
Our conscious hearts, though distant far, may glow.

Still may the sacred bond of strong affection
Unite our souls by its electric chain;
And, linked together by that sweet connection,
Even half the world shall sever us in vain.

Upon that chain I hang this simple token
Of fond remembrance and of love sincere;
And, while these sacred links remain unbroken,
Slight though the gift, to thee 'twill still be dear.

Ah! yes, whate'er, to Memory's heart appealing,
Of those thou leav'st behind thee seems to speak,
Shall have a power to touch the chords of feeling,
To which the strains of eloquence were weak.

Each simple flower, whose breath, the air perfuming,
  In field or forest wont to greet thee here,
'Mid India's bright savannahs meekly blooming
  Shall to thy heart for Scotia's sake be dear.

There, from the beaming smile of cheerful Morning,—
  From the soft blush of meek, retiring Eve,—
From every star that burning sky adorning,
  Sweet thoughts of home thy spirit shall receive.

When, o'er the Western plains serenely sinking,
  The setting sun his softened light shall pour,
Thy spirit, of these floods of glory drinking,
  Shall fondly muse on those thou seest no more.

Then shall thy heart, in silent sadness doating
  On the bright memory of the days gone by,
Find types of these in the fair islets floating
  In the soft, liquid light that bathes the sky

And when the Moon, in placid beauty shining,
  Shall round thee there her tranquil beams diffuse,
With feelings sad and deep, yet unrepining,
  On scenes she once revealed thy soul shall muse.

If e'er, perchance, thy pensive ear shall listen
  To some sweet strain in days of childhood dear,
Ah, then, methinks, thy brightening eye shall glisten,
  And tell thy feelings by a starting tear.

And when thy little household duly gathers,
  To join in praise and prayer at evening's close,—
When to the God and Guardian of your fathers
  Ye raise the song which oft in Scotia rose,—

Should thoughts arise of those who round the altar
  Are meeting now where thou wert wont to meet,
Though sad thy soul, and though thy voice should falter,
  Yet will that sadness of thy soul be sweet.

But though, the sacred lyre while gently sweeping,
  At times thou touch its chords with trembling hand,
Let not the voice of joy be drowned in weeping,
  Nor "the Lord's song" be hushed in that "strange land."

Oft let thy strains, poured forth in cheerful measures,
  Proclaim to all around, with joyous thrill,
That the bright source of these remembered pleasures—
  The unchanging God of Love—is with thee still.

This little span of earth our paths may sever,
  Through one short stage of this brief "Course of Time,"
Yet shall we meet, ere long, to dwell for ever
  United in one bright and glorious clime.

THE SOLACE OF IMAGINATION.

I.

When doomed to see, with tearful eye,
  Each cherished flower of mortal birth
Droop, one by one—decay—and die,
  And leave a wilderness on Earth;
When all we loved have passed away,
  And scarce a joy is left to us,
And even Hope's delightful ray
  Is growing faint and tremulous;

II.

Still hath Imagination power
  Around our souls a gleam to throw,
Which may, at least for one short hour,
  Chase from our hearts the clouds of woe,
And waft us from this scene below,
  By weak and wearied mortals trod,
And bid us taste the streams that flow
  Throughout the garden of our God.

III.

Oh! but for her how dry and parched
  Would seem this Earth on which we move—
A dull, dark, flat expanse, o'erarched
  By tinsel drapery stretched above!

For, oh! 't is she herself who gives
The stars their power o'er human hearts,
And Nature all around us lives
But in the life which she imparts.

IV.

Sweet Power! how oft hath it been thine,
Amid the dungeon's rayless gloom,
To make the light of Heaven to shine,
And all the flowers of Earth to bloom!
By thy serene and cheering ray,
There to thy musing son* 't was given
To trace the Pilgrim's onward way,
Through all the snares of Earth, to Heaven.

V.

'T was thine round Tasso's pensive soul,
While brooding there o'er many a wrong,
To bid celestial visions roll,
And pour the heavenly light of song.
And Dante, from his home exiled,
And Petrarch o'er his Laura's grave,
The bitterness of woe beguiled
By the deep bliss thy visions gave.

VI.

The bard divine,† whose outward eye
In deep and cheerless gloom was sealed,
Beheld the glorious realms on high,
To his rapt soul by thee revealed.

* Bunyan † Milton.

Thy purest light, around him poured,
  Gave smiling Eden to his sight;
And, led by it, he fearless soared
  To the third Heaven's sublimest height.

VII.

Thy voice recalls whate'er hath flown,—
  Whate'er hath blessed our happiest hours,
To cheer our hearts when sad and lone,
  And chase the gloom that round us lowers.
Thou to our spirits canst restore
  Whate'er the hand of Time destroys;
And o'er them floods of joy canst pour,
  Drawn from all past and future joys.

VIII.

Yet are there whose dull souls deride
  The raptures of thy favoured few,—
Whose cold and philosophic pride
  Disdains the joys they never knew;
But he who, in affliction's hour,
  Hath felt the balm bestowed by thee,
Reveres thee as a holy Power,
And ever-keeps thy sacred dower
  From Earth's profane pollutions free.

THE SOLACE OF FRIENDSHIP.

I.

With thoughtful spirit when we gaze
On Midnight's deep and glowing sky,
Though many a star sends down its rays
Upon our calmly musing eye;
Yet thou sweet Moon, who shinest nigh,
Art lovelier, dearer to our soul,
Than all the radiant orbs on high
That through the blue empyrean roll.

II.

Bright suns are there, we know, and each
The light and glory of his sphere;
Yet, ere their glimmering rays may reach
Our dim and distant vision here,
Though pure their lustre be and clear,
How faint and chill to us it seems!
But sweet thine influence is, and dear
The smile on thy mild face that beams!

III.

Afar we view their mystic dance,
And faintly hear their choral song,
But cold and distant is the glance
Bestowed on us by that bright throng.
We see them gaily glide along,
Yet mingle not in all their mirth;
But deep the sympathy, and strong
The ties that bind thee to our Earth.

IV.

Even so, when clouds of sorrow roll,
  And tinge with gloom our every thought,—
When to relieve that night of soul,
  Some cheering ray our heart hath sought,—
  The gleam from mirthful faces caught,
May some faint light, perchance, impart;
  But sweeter far the solace brought
By one dear, sympathizing heart.

V.

Yea, though this world's most glorious ones
  Around us pour their fostering rays,—
Even they who seem to shine as suns,
  With planets basking in their blaze,
  We draw less pleasure from the praise
Of flattering multitudes around,
  Than to our soul the smile conveys
Of one who to our heart is bound.

LINES WRITTEN IN GALLOWAY,

JULY, 1843.

I SAID my harp should sleep for aye—flung by—a useless thing;
I said that thou, my joyous muse, must curb thine eager wing;
I said that I must onward press, my pilgrim path along,
Nor cheer me, as in days gone by, with the glad voice of song.

Vain thought for him who strays alone o'er this wild, martyr land!
I feel a spell upon me here I may not dare withstand.
If on these scenes that stretch around mine eye unmoved should look,
The murmuring streams would speak to me with sadly mild rebuke:

For still they seem to whisper, as they sweep their pebbled bed,
The names of those who here, of old, for Jesus lived and bl[illegible];
And still they seem to image, in their pure and peaceful flow,
The holy lives [illegible] those wh[illegible] dwelt beside them long ago.

Each rock and cave, each woody holm, preserves their
memory still;
There stands for them a mounnment on every rugged
hill;
And yet along the monutain side a lingering echo
floats,
Where oft of old their song of praise sent up its joyful notes.

The old familiar voices upon the breezes come,
And while all nature speaks aloud, shall man alone be
dumb?
Ah! no: nor is his voice unheard; the same rejoicing
strain
That gladdened once the wilderness is thrilling there
again.

'T is heard by Renwick's simple tomb, amid the green
Glencairn;
'T is heard amid the heathy wilds of lone and drear
Carsphairn;
'T is heard beside the silvery Ken, and by the banks
of Ayr,
Where Welsh and Guthrie raised of old the voice of
praise and prayer.

'T is heard beside the rude grey stones* where oft in
days of old
The holy convocation met, the sacred feast to hold;
Green Anwoth's † heights have heard afar the same
triumphant song,
And all the echoing rocks around the hallowed strain
prolong.

* The communion stones at Irongray.

† Where Samuel Rutherford was for some time minister.

'T is heard where lie the bones of him who lived to
preach and pray,*
And died with prayer upon his lips amid the bloody
fray;
'T is heard where pours the winding Nith, and sweeps
the placid Dee;
It mingles with the voice of streams, and with the
sounding sea.

'T is heard where'er the memory lives of those whose
blood was shed
Like water in the glorious cause of Christ, their living
Head,—
Where'er a fearless soul shakes off the world's debas-
ing bonds,
And to the known—the thrilling voice of Christ the
king responds.

'T is heard from thousand voices now, of stedfast men
and true,
Where once the scattered remnant met,—the faithful
but the few:
And still more loud that strain shall swell, thought
hand should join in hand,
From moor to hill—from hill to shore—to drive the
dauntless band.

Vain thought, that they, whose breasts are warmed with
blood of martyred sires
Whose voice of praise unsilenced rose 'mid tortures,
chains, and fires

* Richard Cameron, of whom it was said that "he lived preaching and praying, and died praying and fighting."

Should shrink because the tempest-gloom hangs low'ring o their path,
Or quail before the ruder storm of man's relentless wrath!

Vain thought that they, whose eyes are fixed in confidence and love
On Him who deigned to leave for them His glorious home above,
And for the joy before Him set such bitter anguish bore,
Should fear to tread the roughest path that He has trod before!

Ah, no! where'er the shepherd leads the trusting sheep will go,
Rejoicing still to follow him, because his voice they know;
And pleasant is the path to them, though rugged oft it be,
Where yet the footsteps of the flock are traced along the lea

THE END.

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